Morning Star

SIR H. RIDER HAGGARD

NEW METHOD SUPPLEMENTARY READER STAGE 5

MORNING STAR

A STORY OF EGYPT

BY

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INTRODUCTION

THIS is a story about magic in ancient Egypt. It was written by Sir Rider Haggard, who also wrote *She* (Stage 4), and *Alan Quatermain* and *King Solomon's Mines* (Stage 5).

Pharaoh was the King of Egypt. His daughter was Neter Tua. "Neter Tua" means "Morning Star". Pharaoh was old and had no son and Neter Tua would have to rule Egypt when he died. She was wise and very beautiful, but Pharaoh and Neter Tua had a great enemy, Prince Abi, who wanted to rule Egypt after Pharaoh's death. Prince Abi was helped by a magician named Kaku. Morning Star loved a young soldier named Rames, but Pharaoh wanted her to marry a prince.

This story tells how in the end, after many dangers and excitements, Morning Star managed to win her battle against Prince Abi and the magician.

One of the strange ideas of the ancient Egyptians is the idea of a persons "Ka". You will read what a "Ka" is on page 16. It is a spirit just like the real person, so that the real person might go away and leave his "Ka" behind, and all men believed that this "Ka" was the person still with them. The "Ka" guards and protects the person and may take his place in time of danger.

LIST OF PEOPLE

Abi—Governor of Memphis, descendant of a King of Egypt on his father's side, his mother was a Nubian.

Ahura—wife of Pharaoh, mother of Neter Tua.

Amathel—Prince of Kesh, son of the King of Kesh, a Nubian, lived at Napata.

Amen—father of the gods.

Asti—wife of Mermes, mother of Rames; she has magic powers; nurse of Neter Tua.

Hathor—Goddess of Love.

Hyksos—people who at one time ruled Egypt; Prince Abi was descended from the Hyksos.

Isis—a goddess.

Janees.

Ka—the double or spirit image of a person.

Kaku—astrologer of Prince Abi, later vizier of Abi, husband of Merytra.

Kepher—a beggar; he is a spirit and has no shadow, and declares the will of Amen.

Mena—a former King of Egypt.

Mermes—descended from former Kings of Egypt, husband of Asti, father of Rames, captain of the King's guard.

Merytra—a female slave of Abi, told Abi's plot to Pharaoh, becomes slave of Pharaoh, and later wife of Kaku.

Neferte—a false name which Asti gives to Neter Tua.

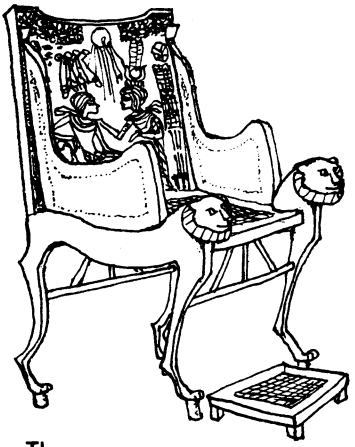
Neter Tua or *Morning Star*—daughter of Pharaoh and Ahura.

Osiris—god of the dead.

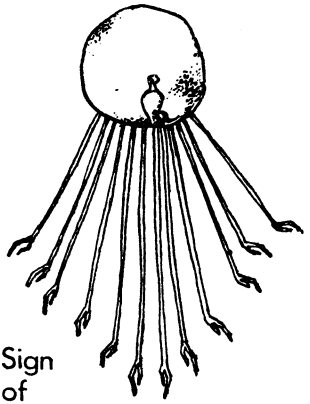
Pharoah—King of Egypt, husband of Ahura, father of Morning Star.

Rames—son of Mermes and Asti; descended from former Kings of Egypt; born on the same day as Neter Tua and brought up with her.

Sekhet—the lion goddess.

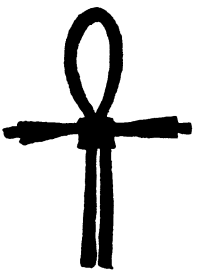


Throne



Sign
of
Amen

Bear



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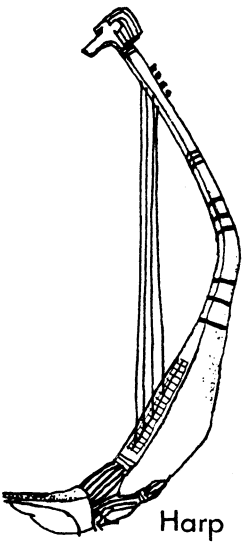
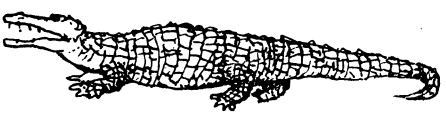


Harp

Scarab



Crocodile

One

WHAT THE STARS TOLD PRINCE ABI

A. It was evening in Egypt thousands of years ago. Prince Abi, Governor of Memphis, arrived in his ship outside the walls of the great city of Thebes. He was a large, dark man. His mother was one of the Hyksos people, and one of his family had once been a Pharaoh. The Hyksos were a people who had come from outside Egypt and had become rulers of the country.

Prince Abi sat looking at the setting sun. On each side of him stood slave-women fanning him. He was angry. One of the slaves touched his head with the feathers of her fan. Prince Abi stood up and struck her so that the poor woman fell to the ground.

"Careless cat!" he cried. "Do that again and you shall be beaten."

"Pardon, great Lord!" she said, beginning to weep. "It was an accident. The wind caught my fan."

B. "Be more careful, Merytra," said Prince Abi to the slave-woman. "Stop weeping. Go and send Kaku, the astrologer,[1] here. Go, both of you."

"He called me a cat," said Merytra angrily to her companion as they went.

[1] Astrologer = one who studies the stars so as to learn the future.

"And he once said that I was ugly," said the other. "I wish a holy crocodile would eat him."

"Hush!" said Merytra. "There is that astrologer, and he looks angry."

Hand in hand they went before the learned man and bowed down.

"Master of the stars," said Merytra, "we have a message for you.—No, don't look at my cheek. Those marks are the marks of the hand of Prince Abi."

"You had better be careful what you are saying. Why did he hit you?"

She told him.

"Oh," he said. "It was very bad to hit such a pretty girl."

"Thank you, O master of learning," said Merytra. "Will you tell our fortunes for nothing?"

"Yes, yes.—I understand that he is angry."

"He is, Kaku. Listen!"

C. As Merytra spoke an angry roar reached them from above: "Where is the cursed astrologer?"

"There!" said Merytra. "I told you that he was angry. Do not trouble about the rest of the papers. Go at once."

"The question is," said Kaku, as he ran towards the place leading to the upper part of the ship, "the question is how Prince Abi will like what is written in the papers."

"Good luck to you," said the girl. "You will need it."

A minute later the astrologer was bowing down before Abi in the upper part of the ship. He bowed so low that his cap fell off his head.

"Why were you so long in coming?" said Abi.

"Because your slaves could not find me, Royal Son of the Sun. I was working in my room."

"But I thought I heard you laughing with them there. Why do you call me 'Royal Son of the Sun'? That is Pharaoh's name. What have the stars shown you? I am now at the turning point of my fortunes, not knowing whether I am to be Pharaoh of Upper and Lower Egypt, or only the Prince of a mere city."

D. "If your majesty[1] will tell his servant exactly what he wishes to know, perhaps I may be able to answer the question."

"Majesty? I wish to know for what reason you call me 'majesty'. I am only Prince of Memphis. Did the stars tell you something? Have you asked them about the future?"

"Certainly, certainly!" said Kaku. "I studied the stars all last night, and have been working out the results, but they are not finished. Question me, and I will answer."

"Look!" said Abi. "The sun is setting behind the tombs of the kings.[2] That is a sign of bad fortune for me. I wished to reach this city in the morning when the stars were more favourable, but the wind held me back. Tell me, shall I be buried in the Valley of the Kings?"

"I think so, Prince Abi. The stars seem to say that you will."

"You are keeping something back from me," said Abi, looking at Kaku's face. "Shall I be buried in the tomb of a Pharaoh?"

"I cannot say," said the astrologer. "There is a force which is working against you. Another star crosses your path."

[1] This is the way in which one speaks to a king.

[2] Tombs = graves. The graves of the kings of Egypt are in a valley near Luxor.

"What star?" said Abi.

"The star of Amen, father of the gods."

E. "Amen!" said Abi. "How can a man fight against a god?"

"Against two gods," said the astrologer. "For with the star of Amen is the star of Hathor, Queen of Love. Look!"

Kaku pointed to the east, where the sky was still red with the sunset.

As they watched the light faded, and there in the sky was a bright and beautiful star, and very close to it another star. For a few minutes only they were seen. Then they vanished.

"The star of Amen, and with it the star of Hathor," said the astrologer.

"Well," said Abi, "they are far from my star, and they have soon gone."

"Yes, Prince; but in twenty years' time they will be near your star and their power will be greater. They will conquer you there, above the Valley of the Kings. After twenty years! But during those twenty years you will shine alone."

F. Abi seized the paper and threw it down.

"Fool!" said he. "Do you think that you will frighten me with this nonsense about stars? Here is my star."

He drew out the sword at his side, and shook it over the head of Kaku:

"This is the star of Abi."

"I have told you the truth as I see it," said Kaku. "If you wish me to tell pleasant things, that is easy. But it seems to me that your future is not so evil. You will have twenty years of power. If after that trouble comes, what does it matter?"

"That is true," said Abi. "I am in a bad temper to-day. I will give you a gold cup as the price of your work. You must always tell me the truth."

Kaku bowed. He was pleased that things had gone so well. He picked up his papers and was just going to leave when some men were seen riding along the bank of the Nile towards the ship.

"That is the captain of my guard," said Abi. "He is bringing me the answer from Pharaoh. Don't go, Kaku. Stay and hear it and give me your advice."

Two

A PLOT[1] *AGAINST PHARAOH*

A. Soon the captain of the guard appeared before Prince Abi.

"What does Pharaoh say?" asked the Prince.

"He says that he will receive you, although he did not send for you. It is not necessary for you to come, as he has heard long ago of your victory over the people of the desert, and he does not want the heads of their officers which you were bringing to him."

"Pharaoh was always a woman in such matter," said Abi. "He should be thankful that he has soldiers who know how to make war. I will go to him tomorrow."

"My lord," said the captain, "that is not all the message. Pharaoh says that he has heard that you have with you a guard of three hundred soldiers: he will not allow

[1] Plot = secret plan, e.g. a plan to kill a person.

these men inside the gates. He says that you should come before him attended by five persons only."

"Oh," said Abi. "Does Pharaoh fear that I shall capture him and the armies and the great city with only three hundred men?"

"No, Prince," said the captain. "I think he fears that you may kill him and declare yourself Pharaoh, for you come next. Pharaoh has no children."

B. "Ah!" said Abi. He walked forward to the front of the ship. Night had fallen, and the moon was pouring her silver light over the desert, the mountains and the city. From the gardens and streets came the sound of music, and on the walls the watchmen called the hour. It was a wonderful scene, and the heart of Abi beat as he looked upon it. What wealth, what power lay there. There stood the house of Pharaoh, and Pharaoh had no child, and he was not strong. But it would be difficult, for Abi knew that Pharaoh was loved by the priests and people; but he, Abi, was feared and hated. Why should he wait? Why should he not try his fortune? He had three hundred soldiers with him, brave men. It was a feast day. The gates were not well guarded. He might break through them in the night and make his way to the palace, kill Pharaoh, and in the morning be seated on Pharaoh's throne. He turned and walked back to where his men were standing, and spoke to the officer.

"I am thinking of striking a blow," said Abi. "Would you and the soldiers follow me into the city and win a crown? If we win, you shall be chief of my army; and you, Kaku, shall be my chief minister. After Pharaoh, you will be the two greatest men in the land."

C. They looked at him astonished.

"It would be dangerous, Prince," said the captain. "But for such a prize I would dare it. As for the soldiers, I cannot speak. They must be told. Perhaps one or two may be afraid and may tell those in the city."

"Prince," said Kaku, "put such thoughts away from you. If you strike now you will have only a crown of shame and a nameless grave. The gods themselves would fight against us."

"So be it," answered Abi. "I accept your judgment. The thing is too dangerous. Let Pharaoh live on, while I make ready."

The astrologer sighed with relief, and the captain did not seem disappointed.

"Sleep well, Prince. There are times when wisdom is better than courage. Pharaoh will receive you two hours after sun-rise. May we go?"

"You must swear," said Abi, "that you will never speak a word of this."

They swore it.

"Captain," said Abi, "you have served me well. Your pay is doubled. If ever I rule there, you may be the chief of my army.—Kaku, take my golden cup. Is there anything else of mine that you desire?"

"Yes," said Kaku. "I would like your slave Merytra."

"Take her."

When they went to tell Merytra the news, they could not find her. Merytra had disappeared.

Three

PRINCE ABI MEETS PHARAOH

A. It was morning at Thebes. The great city was bright in the morning sun. In a large and beautiful boat stood Abi, the Prince, richly dressed, and with him Kaku the astrologer, the captain of his guard and three other officers. In a second boat there were soldiers who were bringing two chiefs and other persons taken in the war in the desert. These two boats moved forward up the Nile through a double line of ships of war, all of them crowded with soldiers.

Abi looked at these ships and said to himself, "Kaku was wise in telling me not to attempt an attack. It is clear that Pharaoh is well prepared against any such surprise." When he reached the bank he saw companies of foot soldiers and horsemen, and on the walls above there were hundreds of other men. At the steps he was met by captains and priests and led through the open gates up the street. Guards rolled back the brass gates of the palace and he walked between lines of beautiful trees until he came into the great hall.

After the brightness outside the hall seemed dark. A ray of light from the window in the roof fell upon Pharaoh and his Queen, Ahura. About him stood his advisers and captains, and beyond them there were servants. Between the pillars of the hall there stood the famous Nubian Guard of two hundred men, each one chosen for his faithfulness and courage.

Pharaoh was a small, thin man about forty years old. He had a kind but anxious face. His head seemed to sink beneath the weight of the crown. His hands were

thin, and his fingers played with the edge of his golden dress.

B. Abi was strong and he looked at this weak man. Yet, though Pharaoh was so weak, there was in him the proud spirit of a line of kings, before which his rough nature bowed. Abi came forward to the steps and knelt there.

"Welcome, Prince Abi," said Pharaoh. "We quarrelled long ago, but time heals all wounds."

"I greet you," said Abi in his deep voice. "Health and strength be with you."

"Thank you," said Pharaoh kindly. "I need health and strength. Tell me now, why have you left your government in Memphis without asking permission? Why have you come to visit me here?"

"Don't be angry with me," said Abi. "Sometime ago I attacked the people of the desert because they were threatening your kingdom. I took them by surprise and killed thousands of them. I captured their kings, and they are waiting outside so that you may kill them yourself. I have brought with me the heads of hundreds of captains. I have made the land to the north of your kingdom safe for many years."

"I don't wish to see those heads," said Pharaoh. "I hate the sight of death. What payment do you ask for this service, my brother?"

C. "Your majesty, I see here the Queen and the servants of your house, but I do not see the royal children. May they be brought here so that I may see their beauty and tell my children about them?"

At these words a look of anger came over the face of the beautiful Queen Ahura.

"Prince Abi," said Pharaoh, "you know well that I have no children."

"I had heard people say that," answered the Prince, "but I did not believe it. I asked so as to be sure of it before I made my request. May I speak here in public?"

"Speak on," said Pharaoh.

"Your majesty has told me," said Abi, "that he has no children. If you had any children, even one daughter, I would say nothing. But, O Pharaoh, the gods have decided that you should shine alone like the full moon at night, not sharing your light with a single star."

Ahura now spoke in a quick, angry voice: "How do you know that, Prince Abi? Pharaoh lives and I live, and a child may yet be born who will rule over Egypt."

"That may be so," said Abi, "indeed I pray that it will be so. If one girl is born to you and Pharaoh, I take back my words, and give you the title which you falsely bear, 'Queen Mother'."

Ahura would have answered, for she was very angry, but Pharaoh put his hand upon her knee, and said, "Continue, Prince Abi! You have told me what I know already,—that I am childless. Now tell us what we do not know—what you desire."

D. "O Pharaoh," said Abi, "you are growing weak, and your soul is nearer to heaven than to earth. In the north and south many dangers threaten Egypt. If you die suddenly, leaving no one to follow you, the great lords of the land will struggle for your place. I am a soldier. I am strong and have many children. The army trusts me and the people love me. I ask this: take me to rule with you; and say that I and my sons are to follow after you. If you do this you may end your days in peace."

When the meaning of these bold words was understood

all those gathered together in the great hall whispered. Queen Ahura was so angry that she crushed the flower which she held in her hand and threw it on the floor. Only Pharaoh sat silent with his head bent and his eyes shut as if in prayer. He sat thus for a minute or more. Then he looked up and there was a smile on his face.

"O Abi," he said in his gentle voice, "listen to me. If you had spoken those words to any of the Pharaoh who came before me, he would have given orders that you and all your family should be killed. I forgive you for telling me your thoughts, but you have not told me all of them. You have not told me"—there was a deep silence in the hall—"that only last night you discussed whether it would be possible to break into the palace with your guard, kill me, and name yourself Pharaoh."

E. There was a loud cry. Several officers sprang up. The captains stepped forward, drawing their swords. But Pharaoh raised his hand, and they were still.

"Who has dared to whisper such a lie?" said Abi. He looked at Kaku, and then at the captain of his guard.

"Do not suspect your officers," said Pharaoh. "They are innocent. I should be grateful to your astrologer who advised you not to do this thing. I should give Kaku a gift to take the place of what he has lost,—to take the place of the slave whom he has lost."

Kaku understood that it was Merytra who had heard and told Pharaoh.

Pharaoh went on, "I forgive you, Abi. Now as to your demand. You are the greatest lord in the land, and it may be that when I am dead you will fill my place, for you are brave and of ancient race on your father's side. But I am still alive and children may yet come to me. Abi, will you remain a prisoner until my death? Or will you

swear that you will never lift your hand against me nor make any plot against me? Swear this in the name of the gods."

Abi swore in the name of the gods that he would make no plan against the King.

Four

THE PROMISE OF THE GOD

A. It was night. In the great temple of Karnak there was a statue of Amen, father of the gods. Pharaoh and his wife Ahura, dressed as common people, knelt at the feet of the god and prayed. They prayed with tears that a little child might be given to them. Above them burned a single lamp. It burned on from age to age. In the dim light they told the story of their cares, while high above them the cold calm face of the god gazed through the darkness, as through thousands of years it had gazed in joy or sorrow at those who went before it. They told of the mocking words of Abi, of the terror of their people who wanted to know who would follow. They promised gifts and offerings. The Queen beat her forehead against the stone feet of the god.

"Let me no more be mocked at," she cried. "Let me bear a child to take the place of the King, and then take my life in payment."

But the god made no answer.

Wearied out, they rose and departed. At the door of

the temple they found the high priest waiting for them,—a little old man.

B. "The god gave no sign," said Pharaoh.

The old priest looked at the weeping Queen, and there was pity in his eyes.

"As I waited outside, a voice seemed to speak, but I may not tell you what it said. Go to your palace, O Pharaoh. Go, O Queen Ahura. In your sleep a sign will come to you, and you will know what to say to Prince Abi."

Like shadows, hand in hand, they passed through the great halls and went through a secret door back to the palace.

It was past midnight. Deep darkness and silence lay upon Thebes, a silence broken only by the dogs howling to the stars, and the heavy feet of the soldiers on the walls. Pharaoh awoke: Queen Ahura was holding his arm.

"Wake, wake!" she said. "I have something I must tell you."

He sat up. There was something in Ahura's voice which drove sleep away.

"What has happened?"

"O Pharaoh, I have had a dream. There was someone in the darkness. He said, 'Queen Ahura, I am the spirit to whom you and your husband prayed this night in the temple. You and your husband have trusted me for many years, and not in vain. A daughter shall be given to you, and my spirit shall be in the child. She shall be beautiful, more beautiful than any child ever was before. She shall rule over Egypt, and she shall be greater than any king before or after her. And she shall have children who will be kings to follow her. Her name shall be Neter Tua. And as a proof of this I put my sign upon your breast,

and the Sign of Life will be upon her breast also. Go and wake Pharaoh, and let my words be written down so that none of them are forgotten."

C. "Then," said Ahura, "a hand came out of the darkness, and in the hand was the Sign of Life. The hand laid the sign on my breast and it burned as though with fire. Then I woke up and the darkness was all about me, nothing but darkness."

When Pharaoh had heard this he kissed his Queen and he called the women who slept outside. They ran in with lights and by the lights he saw just below the throat of the Queen a red mark shaped like the Sign of Life. Then he gave orders that the high priest of Amen should be brought from the temple. The priest came, and the words of the dream were written down. In the morning Pharaoh called his court and Prince Abi was brought before him.

"O Prince," he said. "I have considered your request, that I shall take you to rule with me on the throne of Egypt, and make you and your sons Pharaohs after me. This request is refused. The gods have told me that a daughter will be born to us who will be called 'Morning Star' and she and her children will be Pharaohs after me. Therefore rejoice with us, and go back to your government, Prince Abi, and be happy in our love and in all that the gods have given you."

Abi shook with anger. He thought that this story was a trick. Then Abi remembered the prophecy of Kaku, that the morning star of Amen would drive away his star.

"You think that I speak falsely, Prince Abi," said Pharaoh. "I forgive you for this. Go and wait, and you will see that I have spoken the truth. Know this, that

when the Princess Neter Tua or Morning Star is born, the Sign of Life will be on her breast. By that you will know that the gods have spoken to me."

So Abi went back to the city of Memphis, and Kaku shook his head and said that the star of Neter Tua would come.

Five

THE BIRTH OF NETER TUA

A. So time went on and a child was born to Ahura. The little girl had a fresh and lovely face and curly hair, and from the first her eyes were blue like the summer sky at evening. On her breast was a mark no bigger than a finger, shaped like the Sign of Life. Pharaoh and all those in his house and the priests were mad with joy, though there were some who were secretly sad that the baby was a girl, thinking that a man and not a woman should wear the crown of Egypt.

Pharaoh gave an order. Wherever the name of Queen Ahura was written in all the land the words "Mother of Morning Star" should be added, and he ordered that a new hall should be built on to the temple of Amen, and on the walls of that hall should be cut the story of the coming of Prince Abi and of the Queen's dream. But Ahura never lived to see this hall, for from the hour of her daughter's birth she became weaker. On the fourteenth day she ordered the nurse to bring the baby to her. She kissed it and blessed it.

B. Now the Egyptians believed that some people had a "Ka' or double. That is a spirit just like the real person, so the real person might go away and leave his Ka behind, and all men believed that this Ka was the real person still with them. This Ka or spirit guards and protects the person and may take his (or her) place in time of danger. Queen Ahura saw the Ka of Morning Star lying in her arms, and she told the Ka to protect Morning Star all through the dangers of her life. Then she said that she heard the god Amen calling for her, because she had promised her life in payment to him for the child. Then she smiled upon Pharaoh her husband, and died happily.

The Queen's body was taken across the river to her tomb in the Valley of the Queens, and the opening of the tomb was built up and sand was poured so that no one should ever find its place.

C. The baby grew up. When it was six months old it was taken to the house of the priestesses[1] of Amen.

Now the captain of the guard in the temple of Amen was called Mermes. He had married a woman magician called Asti. Mermes was of the family of those who had been Pharaohs before the present family of Pharaohs. The family of Mermes was driven out by the family to which the present Pharaoh belonged. Pharaoh's advisers said that Pharaoh ought to kill Mermes and his wife for fear that they should rise against him and try to be Pharaoh in his place. He did not kill Mermes, but sent for him and told him everything.

Then Mermes bowed before Pharaoh and said, "O Pharaoh, why should you kill me? It has pleased the gods to bring my house down and to set up your house. I am satisfied to be as I am, a soldier in your army. Therefore

[1] Priestess = woman priest.

let me live in peace as your true and humble servant."

When Pharaoh heard these words he said, "Mermes, you are an honourable man, and you are my equal in blood. I believe that you will not do any harm to me, nor will I do harm to you. Rather, you shall be my friend and adviser."

Pharaoh offered high rank and offices to Mermes, but he refused them.

"No," he said. "Tall trees are the first to fall."

So Pharaoh made him captain of the guard. He became a friend of Pharaoh, and one of his chief advisers.

Six

THE BIRTH OF RAMES

A. Now on the day of the birth of Princess Neter Tua, Asti, the wife of Mermes, had a son. He was a fine child of great strength and beauty. His skin was very fair, but his eyes were black and shining. His head was well shaped, and Asti, his mother, said, "This is a head shaped to wear a crown." She called him Rames, for that was the name of one of the family who had been King of Egypt. Now someone heard this saying and told it to the Council, and the Council urged Pharaoh to kill the boy, because Asti had given him a royal name. Pharaoh would not do this.

"He was born on the same day as my daughter. This boy may live to be a friend and helper to her. Let things happen as the gods order. I do not wish to make myself a god, and destroy life which they have made."

So Rames lived.

The house of Mermes was inside the great temple of Amen, near to the house of the priestesses of Amen, where Princess Neter Tua was being brought up. When Queen Ahura died Asti was made nurse to the Princess. So Neter Tua slept in the arms of Asti together with her own son Rames. So the two babies learnt to walk and talk together, and as children they were playfellows.

B. Rames was bold and brave, but the little Princess was always his master, not because she was to be Queen of Egypt, but because she had strength within herself. She decided what games they were to play. Sometimes Neter Tua had what she called her silent hours. She would not allow anyone to come near. She walked by herself amid the great pillars of the temple and looked at the pictures on the walls.

"What do you see there, O Morning Star?" asked Rames. "Those are dull things, those stone gods, and they frighten me."

"They are not dull, and they don't frighten me," said Neter Tua. "They talk to me. I can't understand all they say, but I am happy with them."

"Talk!" said Rames. "How can stones talk?"

"I don't know," said Neter Tua. "But they do talk. Now will you be silent! I say that they talk."

When Rames was seven years old he went to school every day in the temple and learned to write. While Rames was in the temple, Neter Tua was left alone.

Seven

THE PRINCESS AND THE CROCODILE

A. One day Rames came back from school in the evening, and he said, "Have you been lonely without me?"

"No," said Neter Tua. "I have had a companion."

"Who is that?" said Rames. "Show him to me and I will fight him."

"It is no one you can see. It is only my Ka."

"Your Ka!" said Rames. "What is that like?"

"It is just like me," said Neter Tua. "But it has no shadow. It talks to me."

"I don't believe in Kas," said Rames.

Then something happened which made Rames think differently about Kas.

In the middle of the temple there was a deep pool. In the pool there lived a sacred crocodile. Rames and Neter Tua had often heard about this crocodile, and wanted to see it. But they could not because there was a wall round, and the door was always locked. But once in every eight days the priest took food to the crocodile. One day Rames saw the priest coming back from giving food to the crocodile. He put his hand behind him to put the key in his pocket, but the key missed the opening of the pocket and fell down on the sand, and the priest did not know that it had fallen.

B. Then Rames took the key and he found the Princess and said, "Morning Star, when I come back from school this evening we can go to look at the crocodile in the pool. Look, I have the key. The priest will not know that he has lost it."

Neter Tua was very pleased, because she did want to see the crocodile.

In the evening the boy came running back from school. He brought a pigeon to give to the crocodile. But he found Neter Tua changed.

"I do not think we will go to see the crocodile," she said.

"Why not?" he said. "No one will know."

"My Ka has been with me," said Neter Tua, "and my Ka warned me it is a bad thing to do and danger will come to us."

"Oh, curse your Ka! Show me your Ka and I will talk to it."

Then Rames was angry and said that she was not to be trusted, that he had given his knife for the pigeon, and the knife was worth many pigeons.

"Well," said Neter Tua, "perhaps my Ka will let me have just one little look at the crocodile. It is a pity to waste the pigeon."

C. So the two children went through the trees in the garden in the shade of the wall and crept along the wall till they came to the door. Then Rames put the key in the lock and turned it. They opened the door a little and went in.

As soon as they were in they wished they had not gone there. The place frightened them. And there was a terrible smell which made Neter Tua feel ill. There was a big pool with an island in the middle. But the water of the pool looked black. Round it there was a narrow stone path, and there was a boat near the side. They could not see the crocodile.

"It is asleep somewhere," said Neter Tua.

"Let us go. I do not like this smell."

"Surely you are not afraid," said Neter Tua. "It would be silly to go now."

"No, I am not afraid."

Rames did not say that it would be impossible to go now because the door had closed behind them and there was no keyhole on the inside. They walked round the pool but they could not see the crocodile.

"Let us go in the boat and look for it," said Rames. "Perhaps it is hiding on the island."

D. Neter Tua jumped into the boat and Rames gave it a push and jumped in after her. He rowed the boat round the island, but still there was no sign of the crocodile.

"I don't believe it's here," he said.

"Try the pigeon," said Neter Tua.

Then Rames threw the pigeon into the water.

"Arise, O crocodile," he said.

Then with fearful suddenness the crocodile arose. They saw its length, its tail, eyes and all its shining teeth as they closed upon the pigeon. Then it went down again into the water.

"That was the crocodile," said Rames, "which has lived here for hundreds of years, and now we have seen it."

"Yes," said Neter Tua, "and I never want to see it again. Get me away, quick!"

The boy seized his oar. Then suddenly the crocodile put up its head just below them and began to follow the boat. Then Neter Tua screamed something about her Ka.

"Tell the Ka to keep the crocodile off," said Rames.

But the crocodile would not be kept off. It put up its grey head over the end of the boat, as if it were coming in.

Rames pushed the oar into the crocodile's mouth.

"Oh, it's coming in, and we shall be eaten alive," said Neter Tua.

Just then the boat touched the land and swung round. The crocodile threw itself on the boat so that it began to fill with water and to sink. Then Rames showed his courage.

"Get on shore," he shouted to Neter Tua.

He ran round and struck the crocodile with the oar. It opened its mouth. He pushed the oar into its mouth and held it.

E. "Let go," said Neter Tua.

But Rames would not let go, for he thought that if he let go the crocodile would follow her. So he held it there until the oar was torn away from him.

The crocodile bit through the oar. It still came on.

Rames jumped into the water and struck the crocodile in the eye. Then the crocodile seized Rames' hand and began to sink back to deep water, pulling the boy after it.

Rames said nothing, but Neter Tua saw the terrible pain in his face.

"Oh, help me, Amen," she said, and she held Rames just as he was falling over the edge.

She set her heel in a crack in the rock, and held on. She was dragged forward, so she thought that in a moment she would be drowned or eaten with Rames. Then something yielded. She and the boy fell backward on the sands. They stood up. Then she saw that Rames' right hand was covered with blood and the little finger was torn off it. She remembered nothing except sounds of shouts and a hammering at the door.

F. When Neter Tua recovered she found herself in the house of Mermes, and the lady Asti was bending over her, weeping.

"Why do you weep?" she asked. "You see that I am safe."

"I am weeping for my son," said Asti.

"Is he dead of his wounds, Asti?"

"No, O Morning Star. He is lying ill in his room. Soon Pharaoh will kill him because he led you, who will be Queen of Egypt, into great danger."

"No, no!" said Neter Tua. "He saved my life."

As she spoke the door opened and Pharaoh came in. His face was white, and he shook with fear. When he saw that Neter Tua was alive and not even hurt he was filled with joy. He put his arms about her and went down on his knees and thanked the gods.

Then she kissed him and said, "Why are you so afraid? The great god Amen promised to protect me. And Rames?"

At the sound of his name Pharaoh's face was filled with anger.

"Don't speak of that boy," said Pharaoh. "He shall be beaten till he dies."

G. "Rames fought the crocodile and offered himself to it in my place. Listen to my story," said Neter Tua.

So Pharaoh listened to the story. When it was done he sent for Rames. Pharaoh bent over Rames and kissed his forehead. And he sent for the greatest doctors to attend to him, and when Rames recovered, Pharaoh sent him a sword, with its handle shaped like a crocodile. And he gave him the title "Defender of the Royal Lady".

Rames and Neter Tua were not allowed to play together any more alone. After this there were always servants

and soldiers with the Princess. Then Rames was put in charge of a captain to be taught how to be a soldier, and from this time on he seldom saw Neter Tua; but there was now a bond between them, for they loved each other. And every morning when Neter Tua said her prayers to Amen she prayed for Pharaoh her father, and for the spirit of Ahura her mother, and then she prayed for Rames.

Eight

THE CALLING OF AMEN

A. Years went by and Princess Neter Tua grew up and became a woman. In all Egypt there was no girl so wise or beautiful. Her eyes were blue as the sea, her cheeks like a rose, and her hair black and curling. Her father taught her about matters of government, and when her education was finished he joined her with him in the government, saying, "I am growing old and weak, and this crown is too heavy for me: daughter, you must share the weight of this crown."

So Neter Tua became a Queen and there was a great ceremony. The priests and priestesses made speeches to her and blessed her. Princes and nobles made offerings to her. Foreign chiefs and kings bowed down before her. And then in the presence of all, Pharaoh put a crown upon her head.

While Tua sat on her golden seat and all the people gazed at her, her eyes looked for one face only, that of the tall and brave Captain Rames. At last their eyes met.

Night came and Neter Tua sat in her room alone. She thought of all the glories of being Queen. But what use was this rule over millions who called her a goddess? Could a crown lift her above the sorrows of mankind? She wanted to learn the truth, and know the future and face it, however bad it might be. She went to the door of her room and told a servant to call Lady Asti to her. After a time Asti came, tall and noble-looking. And although she was fifty years of age her hair was not yet grey.

B. "I was in the temple when your servant called me," said Asti. "Let your majesty forgive me if I have been long in coming."

And she bowed low before her. The Queen lifted her up and kissed her.

"I am weary of these high titles. Call me Tua, O my mother."

"What is the matter?" said Asti. "Was the crown too heavy for you?"

"Yes, mother, the weight of it seemed to crush me. I am weary and I cannot sleep. Tell me, why did Pharaoh call a council after the feast? Mermes was one of them, so you must know. Why was I not called to the council?"

"Well," said Asti, "it was because they were talking about your marriage."

"My marriage?" said Tua. "With whom?"

"There were seven names: the Prince of Kesh, the sons of foreign kings, and great nobles."

As each name was said Tua waved her hand.

"I don't know him," she said. "Too old! Fat and ugly! A foreign dog!"

And then at last she said, "Go on. Any other name?"

The two women looked at each other.

Then Asti said, "It cannot be. A law was made long ago barring our family for ever from the kingship of Egypt. You do not wish to bring my son to his death, Tua?"

C. "When I am Pharaoh," said Tua, "there are certain matters in which I shall be my own law, and if the people do not like it they must find another Pharaoh."

"You must bury that thought," said Asti, "or Rames will never see you placed alone upon the golden seat. Already I am afraid for him. He may be given poison. A spear may strike him by accident, or an arrow be shot by accident and no one will know from where it came."

"If that happens I shall be revenged."

"Of what use is vengeance, child, when the heart is empty and the tomb is closed?"

"They call me Morning Star, daughter of Amen. The god Amen should love me. He should hear my prayers and give me power and protect those who are dear to me. Mother, they say that you can open the ears of the gods and make their mouths speak. Mother, I command you to call up my father Amen so that I may talk with him."

"Are you not afraid?" said Asti.

"Should a daughter be afraid of her father?" said Tua. "Amen is said to be my father. If Amen is my father let him appear before me face to face."

"Come," said Asti. "I will try. Perhaps he may listen. Perhaps if he comes, you and I must pay the price."

D. They went along narrow passages and down secret stairs until they came to a door in the rock. Asti unlocked the door and when they had entered, locked it again behind them.

"What is this place?" said Tua.

"It is the burial place of the high priestesses of Amen. They say that the god watches here. No one has entered it for thirty years. See here in the dust are the footprints of those who carried the last priestess to her grave."

She held up her lamp, and by the light of it Tua saw they were in a cave, the walls of which were painted with pictures of the gods. On each side were cases in which the bodies of the dead had been put. And at the end there was an altar of black stone.

E. Asti led Tua to the step in front of the altar and told her to kneel down. Then she went away with the lamp and put it in a room at the side, so that now there was black darkness. Then Tua heard Asti creep back towards her. She came and knelt by the altar. And it seemed to Tua that from each of the graves on right and left there rose the Ka of the priestess who was buried in it. And these Kas came near and watched and listened. She could not see or hear them, but she knew that they were there and was able to count their number, thirty-two of them. Then there arose in her mind a picture of them, each one different.

Now Tua heard Asti murmuring her prayers. But no answer came.

At last Asti stood up and said, "Let us go before these watching spirits become angry with us." Tua stood up. She held Asti's hand. She did not know why, but her fear grew and deepened. Then she fell on her knees, for there by the door of the cave by which they had entered there was a glow of light. The light took shape, the form of a woman dressed as a Queen of Egypt. The figure stood in front of them and spoke in a sweet, low voice.

"O Queen of Egypt, daughter of Pharaoh, are you afraid to look at your mother, Ahura? You who called

upon the god Amen to come? I tell you both that if the god had come you would have died. But he is merciful and he has sent me as his messenger."

F. "Let Amen pardon us," said Tua. "I am to blame, not Asti. I am full of doubts and fears about myself and another, and I want to know the future."

"Why, Queen Neter Tua, do you want to know the future? If all the pains of life and death were open to our eyes who would dare to live?"

"I want to know only one thing," said Tua. "I want only to be sure that I shall not live loveless, that I shall not be given to one I hate; that one whom I love shall call me wife. He is in great danger. Amen is powerful: let him help me now."

"Your faith will help you. The words which Amen spoke about you are written down. You will not love in vain."

"Oh, tell me, when troubles come to me and there are dangers, and I am lonely, to whom shall I turn for help?"

"Why, Tua, you have one within you who is strong and who will help you. Your Ka was given to you at birth and Asti can call it forth.—Come here, Asti. I must speak with you, Asti, before I go."

Asti came forward, and the bright figure bent over her so that the light of it shone upon her face. She bent over her and whispered in her ear.

Then Ahura held out her hands towards Tua as if she was blessing her, and then she vanished.

Nine

THE FEAST FOR PRINCE AMATHEL

A. For a whole month there were great feasts in Thebes. Feast followed feast, and at each of them one of those men mentioned in the council as a husband for Neter Tua was the guest of honour. At the end of the feast Pharaoh her father and the councillors came to her and asked Neter Tua if this man suited her. But Tua was wise and gave no direct answer. She asked that the writing of the dream of Ahura should be brought and read to her. And when it was read she pointed out that Amen promised her a royal lover. These chiefs and soldiers were not royal.

At last only one person was left. Tua knew that Pharaoh and his councillors wished that she should take this man as her husband. This man was Amathel, Prince of Kesh. His father lived at Napata, a great city far in the south. Once in the far past a race of Pharaohs came from this city Napata and ruled over Egypt. After this the people of Egypt drove them out. A law was made that none of these people should ever wear the crown again. Of the descendants of these Pharaohs Rames was the last one.

Now when this family to which Rames belonged was driven out of Egypt, they were also driven out of Kesh, and the people of Kesh set up a new king to rule over them. Prince Amathel was a descendant of these new kings of Kesh, and would be king of Kesh when his father died.

B. The councillors hoped that the land of Kesh might come under the crown of Egypt by marriage between Amathel and Neter Tua. It was arranged that Prince Amathel should be present at the crowning of the Queen,

and he had come. And now a great feast had been prepared, at which Amathel would meet Neter Tua. Neter Tua pretended that she knew nothing about it. When she came into the great hall she asked her father, "Who is the guest who is being welcomed so splendidly?"

"My daughter," said the King, "it is the Prince of Kesh. His father is looked upon as a god in his country, and the Prince will be king one day."

"Kesh," she said. "I thought that we claimed Kesh as a part of Egypt."

"It was once ours," said Pharoah, "and the kings of Kesh were once kings of Egypt. But they were driven out. And there are now only three left of that line of kings: Mermes, captain of the guard, Asti his wife, and Rames, who saved you, as you remember, from the crocodile."

"Oh, yes," said Tua. "I remember. Then why is not Mermes king of Kesh?"

"Because the people of the city of Napata raised up the family of Prince Amathel to rule over them."

"Then he has no right to be king?" said Tua.

"Don't say that," said Pharaoh sharply. "If that is so, I have no right to be king of Egypt, and Mermes should be king in my place."

C. Tua made no answer.

Then as they sat down she asked carelessly, "Does this Prince want to marry me?"

"Yes. Did you not know it? Be pleasant to him since it is decided that you are to take him as your husband. —Here he is."

There was a sound of wild music. A band of players entered the hall, blowing horns and beating drums. After them came twenty black soldiers, carrying spears with broad blades and shields and dressed in the skins of wild

animals. Then came the Prince of Kesh, a short young man with broad shoulders and a heavy face. There were chains of gold and jewels round his neck. He wore a crown of tall feathers. Fan-bearers walked beside him, and the edge of his long coat was held by two little men, full-grown, but no taller than a child.

Tua looked at the Prince while he was far away and she hated him as she had never hated anyone before. Then she looked over his head and saw that behind him there was a guard of Egyptian soldiers and the captain of the guard was Rames. Rames was simply dressed in his brass armour, and he wore at his side the sword with the crocodile handle which Pharaoh had given him. Why was Rames chosen to wait upon Prince Amathel? Rames was of more ancient family than he and should by right be king of Kesh. The councillors had chosen Rames so as to humble him, and Tua decided that some day those who had planned this evil should pay the price.

D. The Prince came up the steps and bowed low to Pharaoh and to her. They stood up and bowed to him. Then Pharaoh welcomed him to Egypt in a few well-chosen words.

Pharaoh then looked at Tua, who as Queen had to make a speech. The speech had been given to her in writing. She knew this, for the paper lay at her side, but she would not say a word. She turned round and told one of her ladies to bring her a fan.

After a long pause Amathel gave his answer which he had learnt by heart. He spoke of the gentle words which had come from the lips of the Queen. But she had not spoken any gentle words. Then Tua looked over the top of her fan and saw Rames smile, and some of the great people at the feast began to laugh. The Prince looked

angry. He ordered that the gifts should be brought. Slaves bearing cups of gold, elephants and other beasts made of gold, golden boxes full of jewels. He gave these to Pharaoh as gifts from his father, the King of Kesh.

Then he said, "In my country such things are common, and I would have brought more of them had the weight not been too great."

Pharaoh thanked him. Then the Prince offered the Queen other presents: strings of jewels, and jewelled pins, and a beautifully made harp, and two black slaves covered with jewels, who were said to be the best singers in the land of Kesh. Pharaoh whispered to Tua to put on one of the strings of jewels, but she would not.

E. Neter Tua thanked Amathel coldly for his gifts and she told Asti, who stood behind her, to carry away the presents as the scent which had been poured over them was too strong. Only she told them to leave the harp. And so the feast began.

Amathel drank much wine, and kept telling Rames, who stood behind him, to fill his cup. Perhaps he did this so as to put Rames in the position of a servant, for cup-filling was no fit task for an officer of Pharaoh's guard. When the feast was done the servants cleared the tables. Then magicians came and did wonderful things. Singers and dancers came. But all the time Amathel took no notice of them. He gazed only at Tua. Tua became weary of the gaze of Amathel.

She said, "I wish to hear the singing of the slaves whose voices are said to be so wonderful."

They came forward and sang sweetly.

When they had done, she said, "You have pleased me much, and in payment I give you your freedom. From now on you may sing before the court, but not as slaves."

Prince Amathel was angry, and said, "Some might have been pleased to keep the gift of the best singers in the world."

"Do you say that these women are the best singers in the world, Amathel? Listen to me. I wish to know how far I fall short of the best singers in the world."

Ten

HOW RAMES FOUGHT PRINCE AMATHEL

A. Tua took up the harp and touched the strings.

"No, no, my daughter," said Pharaoh. "It is not right that the Queen of Egypt should sing before this company."

"Why not, my father?" she asked. "To-night we are all doing honour to the Prince of Kesh. Pharaoh receives him. Pharaoh's daughter accepts his gifts, and one of blood more ancient than his own waits upon him as cup-bearer. Why should not Egypt's queen try to please him as best she can, since she has no other gift to give him?"

A dead silence followed this bold speech. Neter Tua stood up and began to play the harp. There was such magic in her touch that all else was forgotten. She played softly at first, and then louder, till the music of the harp rang through the hall, and then she began to sing a wild and sweet song. It was the story of how a man fell in love with a priestess of Hathor, and was killed by the goddess.

Tua ceased singing. She sank back in her chair, trembling. Her blue eyes shone in her pale face like stars. There

was silence in the hall. None dared to applaud, for they remembered that this wonderful young queen was said to be the daughter of the god Amen, and they had been listening not to a royal lady but to a goddess.

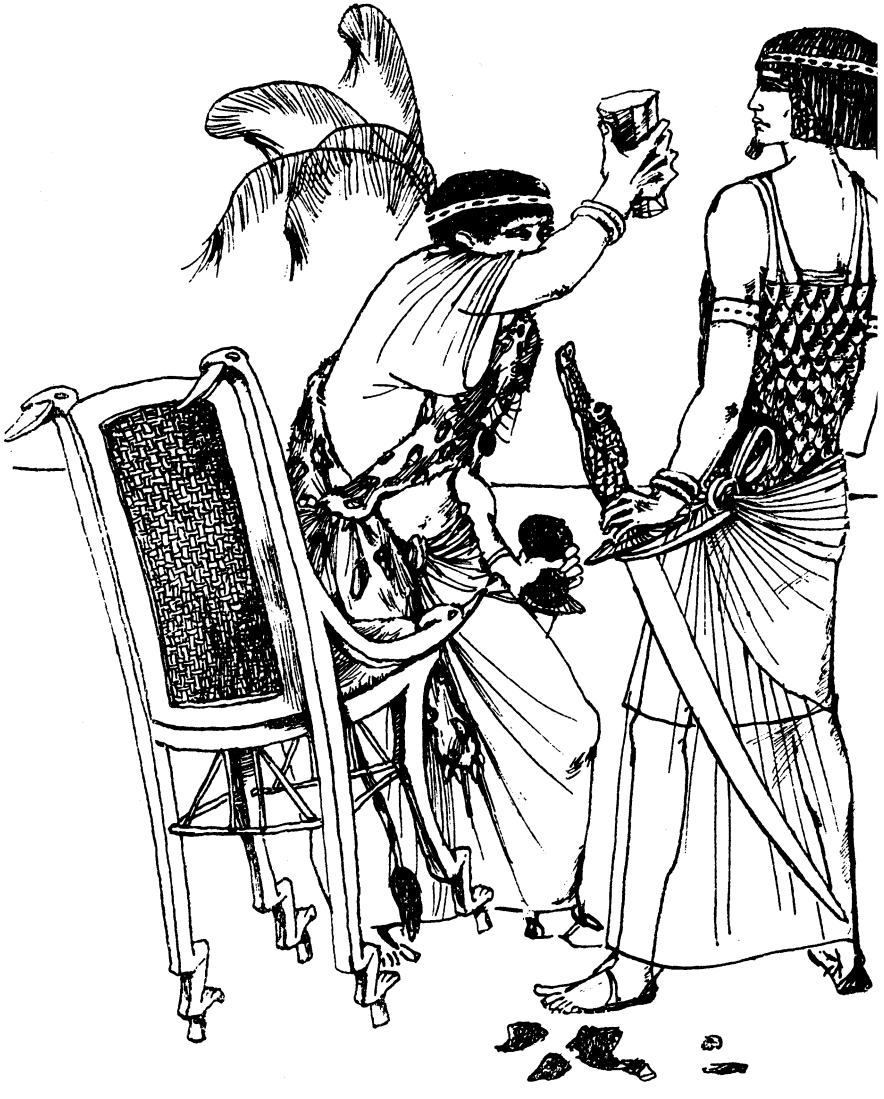
They sat quietly, as though sleep had come upon them, and gazed at the sweet, pale face and those shining eyes. Amathel leaned his head on his hand and gazed like the others. But the eyes of Tua were not looking at him. If he had been stone they could not have noticed him less. They gazed at something behind. He turned to see what it was Neter Tua was gazing at. He saw the captain of the guard, who was said to be of a race more ancient than his own.

In the hand of Rames was a tall golden cup of wine. Amathel pushed back his chair. The top bar of the chair struck the cup, so that the red wine poured over the Prince's head.

B. The Prince sprang up roaring with anger.

"Son of a dog!" he shouted. "Brother of a pig! Is this the way in which you wait upon me?" He seized the cup and struck Rames in the face, and drew his sword to kill him. Rames also wore a sword. With a low cry he drew it. He sprang back to avoid the blow which Amathel struck at him. Amathel followed, calling him a coward. At the next moment the hall rang not with Tua's music but with the sound of fighting. Men looked to Pharaoh, waiting his word. But Pharaoh seemed to have been overcome by the horror of the scene, and to have fainted. He lay in his chair with his eyes shut as if in sleep. Then they looked to his queen, but Tua made no sign.

Rames forgot everything except that he, a soldier, son of a royal race, had been struck across the face by a Nubian who called himself a prince. He sprang straight



The Prince seized the cup.

at the throat of Amathel. His blow went high and only cut off one of the feathers on the Prince's head. Amathel was a powerful fighter and had the strength of madness. Moreover his sword was longer. It fell upon the arm of Rames and beat him back. It fell again upon his shoulder and beat him to his knees. It fell a third time and wounded his leg.

C. A soldier of Pharaoh's guard shouted to encourage his captain. The Nubians shouted back, calling to their Prince to cut his enemy's throat. Then Rames seemed to awake. He sprang from his knees. He struck, and the blow was stopped by the iron armour which Amathel wore beneath his clothing. He struck again, and now the blood of Amathel flowed. The answering stroke bent Rames almost to the ground, but he leaped up and thrust with all the strength of his young limbs. His sword pierced Amathel from breast to back. For a moment the Prince stood still. Then he fell backwards, dead.

Now, with shouts of rage, the giants of the Nubian guard rushed at Rames to avenge their master's death. He was driven backwards by their spears into the company of the Egyptian guard. The Nubians attacked them, and so the battle began. These soldiers hated each as their fathers had done before them. It was a fierce battle, but the Nubians had no captain, while Rames led the Egyptians. The Nubians began to give way. They fell one by one, till there were only three left standing. These three threw down their arms and cried for mercy.

D. Then Rames understood what he had done. With bent head and red sword he climbed the steps to Pharaoh and said, "I have avenged my honour and the honour of Egypt. Kill me, O Pharaoh!"

But Pharaoh made no answer, for he was still unconscious.

Then Rames turned to Tua. "Kill me, O Queen," he said.

All this time Tua had watched the battle as if she were turned into stone. Now her danger was passed. She could never be forced to marry that Nubian, and in her heart she blessed Rames for having killed Amathel. But she knew well enough that if Rames had escaped the sword of Amathel, it was only to fall into a danger from which there might be no escape. The dead Prince was the son of a great king,—so great that for a hundred years Egypt had not dared to make war on his country. The land of Kesh was so far away; its forts were so strong; it was so hard to reach across the desert. The Prince of Kesh had been killed at a feast in Pharaoh's court. He had been killed by an officer of Pharaoh's guard. His Nubian guard had been killed by Pharaoh's soldiers. Such a deed meant war for Egypt.

E. Tua looked at Rames kneeling before her. Her heart ached. She tried to think of some way of escape for him. Then she thought of a plan. She ordered that the doors of the hall should be locked, and that those doctors who were among the company should attend the wounded. Then she called a high council of the kingdom.

"My lords," she said, "a fearful thing has happened. Egypt's guest and his guard have been killed. You know as I do that this was only mischance. The Prince drank too much wine and in his drunkenness he struck a high-born man. Am I right?"

"Yes," said the councillors. "Rames and his guard are not to be blamed."

"To add to our trouble, Pharaoh has been struck

with illness by the gods. He sleeps. He cannot speak. I do not know whether he will live or die. So it seems that I must act for him. Is it your wish that I should act for my father?"

"It is our wish," answered the councillors.

"What shall we do in this matter?" said the Queen. "There are various things which we might do. First, I might order that Rames and all the soldiers who fought with him should be killed. But if we kill these men, will they not say that they were ordered to kill the Prince of Kesh and his guard and then we killed them in order to cover up our crime? It will be believed that there is blood on the hands of Pharaoh, King of Egypt. It will be believed that we planned to kill our guest and to hide our guilt by murdering those who carried out our orders. There is a second thing which we might do. We might order Rames and his companions to travel to the city of Napata and there tell all the sad story of the death of his son to the King. We might send a letter to the King of Kesh saying, 'You have heard our story. Now judge. If you are noble-hearted and it pleases you to forgive these men, we will bless you. But if you, angry and unforgiving, condemn them and send them back to us for punishment, they shall suffer whatever punishment you may order.' Is this a good plan? The King of Kesh cannot complain if he is made judge in his own case, nor can the people in other lands say that we in Egypt murder our guests. Tell me if this plan is good?"

F. Then the council and all the guests cried out that the plan was very good. They shouted that their young Queen was the spirit of wisdom.

"Such, then, is your wish," said the Queen. "I therefore order that two thousand of the best soldiers shall

sail up the Nile to Kesh, and in command of them shall go Captain Rames, and with him those others who did the deed of blood."

At this order, which sounded more like an honouring of Rames than dishonour, some seemed surprised, and Rames looked up trembling at the Queen.

"I order," said Tua, "that when they go to Napata they shall kneel before the King. When they have been judged they shall return and report to us the judgment of the King. Let the soldiers and the ships be made ready this night."

The royal orders were written down and read aloud. Then she put her sign upon them. And she ordered that a copy of them should be sent to the King of Kesh. The doors were then opened. Pharaoh was carried to his bed. Tua, so weary that she could hardly walk, went to her room leaning on the shoulder of Asti.

Eleven

RAMES AND NETER TUA

A. Tua lay on a couch. She would not go to her bed. Asti stood near her.

"Your majesty has done strange things tonight," said Asti, in her quiet voice.

"Very strange," said Tua. "You see the gods put the strings of Fate in my hands and I pulled them."

"It seems to me," said Asti, "that for a beginner your majesty pulls somewhat hard."

"Yes, Asti," said Neter Tua. "I pulled so hard that I pulled your son out of the danger of death into a place of some honour, if he knows how to stay there."

"I should like to know how your majesty got the lords to agree to sending an army to Napata under the command of a boy who had just killed the Prince. This will mean war between Kesh and Egypt, I fear."

"I suppose," said Tua, "that Rames should have been killed. Do you think he poured that wine on Amathel's head on purpose?—Give me a cup of wine, Asti."

Asti brought a glass of wine.

"I drink to the divine Prince of Kesh who is now feasting with the gods. I hope that he will have left the table before I get there."

She threw the glass down on the ground.

"There! I feel strong again. I shall go and visit Pharaoh. Come with me, Asti."

Tua arrived at the bedside of Pharaoh. She found that he was out of danger. The doctors believed that he would live, but he must lie quiet for a long time, seeing as few people as possible and being troubled by no business. Tua kissed her father and left him.

"Now will your majesty go to bed?" asked Asti.

"No," answered Tua. "Call Mermes, your husband."

B. So Mermes came and stood before her. He was still a noble-looking old man as when Tua played as a child in his house. But now his hair had grown white and his face was drawn with grief for the sake of Rames whose foolishness had brought him into such danger, and because of Pharaoh who was his friend.

"Do not despair, noble Mermes," said Tua. "They say that Pharaoh will stay with us."

"If he had died," said Mermes, "I should have felt that my son was to blame."

"Not so, Mermes. What would you have felt if your son, after having been struck by that fat Nubian, had knelt at his feet and begged for his life?"

Mermes smiled. "The question is, what would you have thought of him?"

"As queen I should have praised him, but as a woman I should never have spoken to him again. Honour is more than life, Mermes. Now when Pharaoh recovers, Rames will be far away," said Tua. "Go and bring Rames here at once, and with him the vizier and the chief clerk of the council."

Then Tua set her hair in order and changed her dress. Then she sat down and waited while Asti stood beside her. At last the doors were opened, and through them came Mermes, the vizier and the chief clerk of the council. They were still half asleep, for they had been called from their beds. Behind them came Rames, who walked with difficulty, for he was still stiff.

Tua questioned the vizier as to what had been done to carry out her orders. He told her that they were being carried out. He spoke of the ships, the food for the men, and so on.

Next she wrote letters to the captains of the fortresses on the upper Nile, telling them Pharaoh's orders, and saying that they were to help Rames. When this was done she sent away the clerk to finish the letters. Then she spoke to Rames. She ordered him to start the next day with those soldiers who were ready, and go to Takensit, which is a fort on the boundary line of Egypt, to wait there till the rest of his soldiers joined him, bringing presents to the King of Kesh and the body of Prince Amathel.

C. Rames walked backwards towards the door.

When he had gone a few steps Tua looked up and said, "Return, Rames. I have a message to give you for the King of Kesh. Leave me with the captain, O Mermes and Asti, and see that none listen to our talk. I will call you later."

Now Rames and the Queen were left alone in the room. With bent head and folded arms he stood before her. At last she spoke in a low voice.

"It is many years since we played together in the courts of the temple, and since then we have never been alone, have we, Rames?"

"No, great lady," said Rames.

"I wish we were children once more, for those were happy days before they separated us, and set you to soldiering and me to the business of government."

"You have learnt your part well, Star of the Morning," said Rames.

"Not better than you, O Rames, if I may judge from the way in which you used your sword this night."

"What shall I say to your majesty? You have saved my life."

"As you once saved mine from the crocodile; and today, friend Rames, I was near to being eaten by a worse crocodile than that which lives in the pool."

"I guessed that, O Queen, and that made me mad. If it had not been for that, the thought that he wanted to marry you, I should only have thrown him down. And now that crocodile will eat no more ladies."

"No," said Tua, "but I think there may be trouble between Egypt and Kesh. And I do not know what Pharaoh will say when he recovers. He will be very angry."

"Tell me, O Queen, what is to be my fate? I have been set in command of this army over the heads of many,

I who am but a captain and a young man. Am I to be killed on the journey or am I to be killed by the King of Kesh?"

"If anyone kills you on the journey, Rames, he will have to deal with me. As for the King of Kesh, you will have two thousand men with you, and you will gather more as you go. Now listen! For this is not written in the orders or in my letters. Egypt has spies in Kesh and I have their reports. The people there hate the Nubian race which rules them. The King (who alone is left now Amathel is dead) is old and foolish. So do you think that you need be killed? If the house of Amathel passed away, you would be King of Kesh, just as you would be King of Egypt if I and my family passed away."

D. Rames looked at the floor. Then he looked up.

"What shall I do?"

"That is for you to find out," said Tua. "There is one thing you should not do. Do not return to Egypt until you are quite sure you will be welcome. Stay in Napata and try to put its affairs in order. If you do that well, Egypt, to which the country of Kesh once belonged, may forgive you."

Rames made no answer, but they looked at each other and smiled.

"Your majesty is weary," said Rames, "I must leave you."

"You must be more weary than I am. You are going on a long journey. I wonder if we shall ever meet again."

"I do not know," said Rames. "But I think it would be better if we did not. O Morning Star, why did you save me this night? I would have been glad to die."

"Would you then be sorry if we did not meet again?"

said the Queen. "I suppose not, since you seem so eager to die."

Rames pressed his hand on his heart. "Tua," he said, "can you forget that you are a queen, and remember that you are only a woman; and as a woman hear a secret and keep it?"

"We have been talking secrets, Rames. You will not tell my secret. Why should I tell yours?"

"Good!" said Rames. "I, your subject, dare to love you."

She made no answer to him in words. Her troubled eyes rested upon him for a moment. Then she bent forward and stretched out her arms towards him, and kissed him. Then she became once more the strong, far-seeing Queen.

"Rames," she said, "look to the future. The King of Kesh is old and weak, and you have a claim upon his crown. Take it. Set it on your head. When you are King of Kesh you may ask for the hand of Egypt's Queen in marriage. Farewell!"

As he turned to go the bright rays of the morning sun came through the window, and struck them both, clothing them in a garment of glory and flame.

Twelve

RAMES DEPARTS

A. Before Rames sailed, Mermes his father and Asti his mother visited him.

"You are born under a strange star, my son. I do not know where it will lead you. All the people talk of the favour which the Queen has shown you."

"Mother," said Rames, "you know magic. Have you any word of comfort for me?"

"My son," said Asti, "I have tried to look into the future, but I can see little of its secrets. Yet I have learnt something. I believe that you and I shall meet again. But you must say good-bye to your father; you will not see Mermes again."

"I do not love life," said Mermes. "Nor do I fear death. You are going forth to fulfil your fortune which I believe will be good. I stay here to fulfil mine which leads me to the grave. I shall never see you in your power when power comes to you. Yet remember, Rames, that however great you are, however high you climb, your footsteps still lead to the same dark grave and to the judgment of the gods. Be great if you can, but be good as well as great. Take no man's life because you are great and hate him. Remember that the beggar child playing in the sand may have a fate much greater than your own. Now Rames, my son, I bless you. Good-bye."

Mermes kissed him on the forehead. Then he turned and left the room.

Asti looked at him and said, "Do not weep. Separations are no new thing. Death is no new thing. Live out your life happy if the days are good, content if they are bad.

Regret nothing but wrong-doing. Fear nothing, expect nothing, since all things are fixed by fate and nothing can be changed."

B. Asti turned to go, but paused and said, "I have a gift for you, Rames."

She held out a thing wrapped in cloth and sealed. Rames broke the seal and opened the packet. He took out the gold ring which Tua had worn on the first finger of her right hand.

"Do you know who wore that ring in years long past?" asked Asti.

He shook his head.

"The last of our family who was King of Egypt wore it. And when he died a princess took it from his finger and gave it to Mermes your father, but he would not take it. So she wore it herself and gave it to her daughter, and now the daughter sends it to you. Keep it hidden until you have passed out of Egypt, for fear that someone may ask you questions which you find hard to answer. My son, you dare to love the Queen?"

"In truth I do, mother. O mother, guard her well."

"I will do my best," said Asti. "Now hide that ring upon your heart and your secret with it. As for the advice the Queen has given you, follow it. For she has the wisdom of the gods."

Then she blessed him, and turned and left the room.

C. Rames went and was seen no more. The talk about his battle with the Prince of Kesh and his appointment to command the men sent to Napata died away. Few people thought that Rames would ever come back. It was thought that the soldiers had orders to kill him as soon

as they were outside Egypt and to take the body as a peace offering.

Greater questions filled the minds of men. Would Pharaoh die and leave Neter Tua to wear his crown? It was a thousand years since a woman had ruled in Egypt, and there never had been an unmarried Queen. It seemed necessary to find a husband for her soon. But Pharaoh did not die. For three months he lay helpless as a child, amusing himself with little things as a child, and talking of children he had known in his youth. Then one day there came a change. He rose from his bed and ordered his council to come. He asked what had happened and why he could remember nothing since the feast.

They gave him soft words. Soon he grew weary and sent them away. When they had gone he sent for Mermes.

D. "The last thing I remember," said Pharaoh, "was the Prince of Kesh fighting with your son, whom some fool had set to wait upon him at table. It was a foolish thing to do, Mermes, for your blood is more ancient than that of the King of Kesh. The horror of the sight of one of the royal guests fighting with one of the officers of the royal guard struck me. After that all was darkness. What happened? Tell me, Mermes."

Mermes answered, "My son killed Amathel in fair fight. The Nubian soldiers attacked your guard. Your guard led by Rames overcame them."

"This will mean war between Kesh and Egypt. Did the council order Rames to be killed?"

"No, Pharaoh. The Queen took charge of affairs as you were ill. She sent a message of peace to the King of Kesh with two thousand soldiers bearing with them the body of Amathel."

"Why two thousand," said Pharaoh, "when twenty

would have done? That is an army. When the King of Kesh sees it advancing he may take alarm. Who is in command of these men?"

"Rames, my son," said Mermes.

Now, weak though he was, Pharaoh nearly leaped from his chair. "Rames!" he cried. "A mere captain! I must still be mad. Who gave him the command?"

"Queen Neter Tua," said Mermes.

"Send for the Queen," said Pharaoh.

E. So Tua was sent for. Soon she came in beautifully dressed. Seeing him sitting up and well she ran to him and kissed him, and for a long time refused to listen to his talk about matters of government. At last he made her sit down by his side and asked her why she had set Rames in command of the men who had gone to Kesh. She told him the story.

"You must understand," she said at last, "that I had to act as I thought best. It would have been impossible to kill young Rames, for all hearts were with him."

"Surely, daughter, you could have got him out of the way?"

"But that is what I have done. I have sent him to Napata, which is very much out of the way."

"But what will happen when he gets to Napata? Either the King of Kesh will kill him with my two thousand soldiers, or he will kill the King of Kesh. Have you thought of that?"

"Yes, father, I have thought of it. And if the King of Kesh is killed, would Egypt weep?"

Pharaoh looked at Tua, and Tua looked back at Pharoah and smiled.

"I see, daughter, that you may become a great Queen. But do not run too fast for fear that you may fall."

Tua had heard such words before from Asti. She smiled but made no answer.

"You need a husband to hold you back," said Pharaoh. "Some great man whom you will love and respect."

"Find me such a man and I will marry him gladly," she said sweetly. "I do not know where he is to be found now Amathel is dead."

When Pharaoh became stronger he again began to look for a husband for Neter Tua. Many names were suggested, but Tua found something against every one of them.

Thirteen

NETER TUA COMES TO MEMPHIS

A. After some months had gone by Pharaoh became weary of this game and asked the advice of his council. They suggested that he should journey through the great cities of Egypt, because the change might be good for his health, and during the journey Queen Neter Tua might meet someone of royal blood with whom she might fall in love.

So Pharaoh asked his daughter if she would go on this journey with him. She answered that nothing would please her better, as she had always wanted to see the great cities of Thebes. Thus began that pilgrimage of which Tua told afterwards on the walls of the wonderful temples which she built. Her own wish was that they should first go south, since she hoped that she might hear some news of Rames and his men, from whom no message had been

received for some time. But Pharaoh did not agree to this as there were no great towns in the south and the people of those parts were in revolt and might attack them. So in the end they went north, staying some days at each great city.

B. They went to Abtu, the holy place where the head of Osiris was buried: here Tua was crowned again, among the rejoicings of the people. Then they went on and made offerings to the Great Pyramids. Neter Tua entered the Great Pyramids to see the bodies of the Pharaohs who had been dead for thousands of years. With Asti and a small guard she rode round the Pyramids in the moonlight, hoping she would meet the ghosts of the kings, but she saw no ghosts.

"Why do you wish to see their ghosts?" said Asti. "Look at their mighty works, such as no king can build today, and let them rest there undisturbed."

"Do you call these mighty works?" said Tua. "What are these things? Only many stones put together by the labour of men to satisfy the vanity of kings."

After the visit to the Pyramids Pharaoh and his Queen entered the great city of Memphis, where they were received by Pharaoh's brother, Prince Abi. Like every other great Lord, he had been invited to the crowning of Neter Tua, but at the last moment he sent his excuses, saying that he was ill. Pharaoh and his council were rather surprised that Abi had not suggested that one of his four sons should become the husband of Neter Tua, but they decided that he was quite sure that the proposal would not be accepted.

C. During all this time Abi had kept quiet in Memphis, where he ruled well and strongly. And he sent his taxes

regularly to Thebes, and even increased the amount of them; so Pharaoh, who was by nature kind and unsuspicious, had long put out of his mind any distrust of his brother. He thought that his hopes of having a share in the government had come to an end at the birth of Neter Tua. When he rode into the city some doubts did creep into his mind when he saw how high its walls were, how strong its gates, when he saw thousands of well-armed troops drawn up on each side of the street, and he looked at his own small company of five hundred men and wished that he had brought more. Tua also had her doubts.

"My father," she said in a low voice while the people shouted their welcome, "my uncle has made a very fine show for us. He has a large number of soldiers."

"Yes, daughter. He is the Governor of Memphis."

"A stranger might think he was its king," said Neter Tua, "and if I were Pharaoh I should have entered here with a larger guard."

"We can go away when we like," answered Pharaoh.

"You mean, my father, we can go away when it pleases Abi to open these great gates behind us," said Tua.

D. They had now reached the place of the great hall where Abi was waiting to receive them. He stood at the head of the steps, a huge coarse man, aged about sixty. Tua looked at him and instantly hated him even more than she hated Amathel. She had not feared the foolish Amathel, but she felt a strange terror of this man who seemed so strong and intelligent, and whose eyes rested so eagerly upon her beauty. Now they were coming up the steps and Prince Abi was welcoming them "to his humble house".

Pharaoh was tired and made no answer; but the young

Queen looked at him and said, "We thank you for your greeting; but, my uncle, why did you not meet us outside the gates? We expected to find the governor outside the gates of the city to give the keys to Pharaoh."

Abi had expected some timid child dressed up as a Queen. He looked astonished at this tall and royal lady who had so sharp a tongue, and he had no words to answer her. She swept past him and demanded to be shown the place where she was to lodge. A great palace had been prepared for Pharaoh and herself; it was in the centre of the city and surrounded by trees. She studied it with her quick eyes and said that it did not please her.

E. So a search was made, and in the end Neter Tua chose another and smaller palace which had once been the Temple of Sekhet. The windows in the towers of it looked out over the Nile, which washed against the foot of it. Indeed the temple was part of the wall of Memphis. There was a great unused gateway near it which had been built up. Round the temple there were big gardens with a high wall round them.

Saying that air from the river would be more healthy for him, Tua persuaded Pharaoh to lodge in this temple, and the guard under the command of his friend Mermes camped in the gardens. Abi pointed out to the Queen that there were no rooms in the temple suitable for her.

"That does not matter," she answered. "In that old tower there are two rooms hollowed out in the thickness of the wall which pleases me; and I can look out over the flat lands and see the distant Pyramids."

So those rooms in which no one had lived for many years were cleaned out, and they lodged in them.

Fourteen

DANGER!

A. On the next day there was a great feast, more splendid than any feast which Tua had seen. Pharaoh and Neter Tua sat on chairs of gold. Abi sat on the Queen's right hand.

"I am honoured," said the Queen. "But why do you not sit by Pharaoh? As his host and subject, you should be sitting on Pharaoh's right hand."

"Who am I to take the place of honour when the King comes?" said Abi. "Let that place be kept for the High Priest of Osiris."

"Osiris is the god of death. Is that why you put his priest near my father?"

"You mean that you think Pharaoh will soon die?" said the Prince.

"No, don't deny it, Prince Abi. I can read your thoughts, and they are evil."

She turned and began to watch those around her. Soon she noticed behind Abi there stood a tall man, dressed as an astrologer. He seemed to be studying everything, especially Pharaoh and herself. Whenever she looked round she saw his quick black eyes fixed upon her.

B. "Who is that tall black man?" she whispered to Asti.

"That is the famous astrologer Kaku. I saw him when he visited Thebes with the Prince, before you were born. I will tell you about him later. Watch him well."

Tua watched and discovered several things, and among them she saw that Kaku observed everything that she

and Pharaoh did,—what they did, what they ate and what they said. And he wrote all this down, no doubt so that he might use it afterwards in reading the future.

Among the ladies of the court was Merytra, now a woman of middle age, but still beautiful. Tua disliked her. But she pleased Pharaoh because she was clever, and her speech amused him; so he kept her waiting upon him as a companion for his lighter hours. Tua noticed something strange in this woman's manner. She looked often at the astrologer Kaku. Kaku smiled at her as though he recognized an old friend. When another woman came to take Merytra's place behind Pharaoh, Merytra went and stood beside Kaku, and under the shelter of her fan spoke to him quickly, as if she was making some arrangement.

C. The feast went on. At last the doors opened and slaves came in bearing the mummy[1] of a dead man, which they set on its feet in the centre of the hall. Then the master of the feast cried, "Drink and be merry, all you great ones of the earth, for you do not know how soon you will come to this last state."

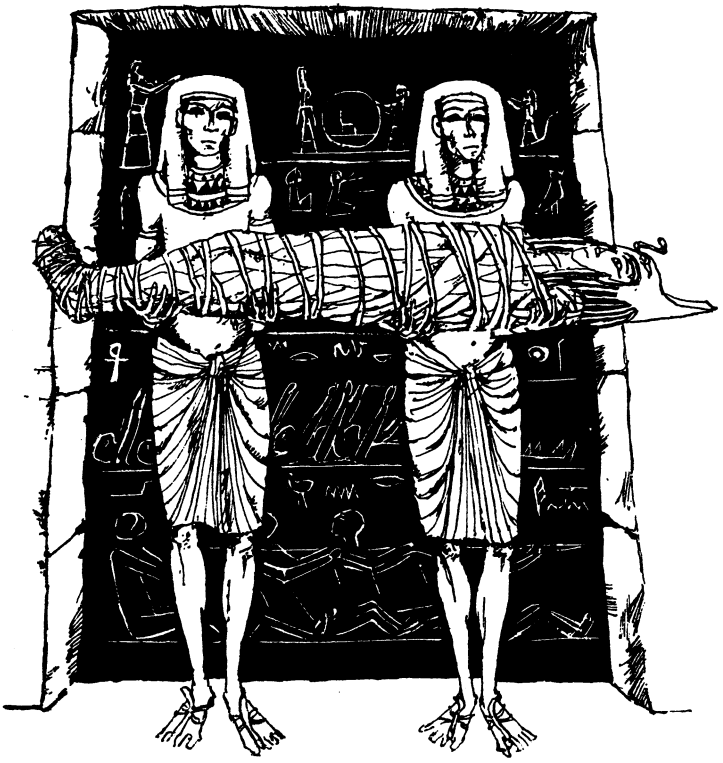
This bringing in the mummy was a very ancient ceremony. It was seldom done in these times. It had fallen out of use. Tua had never seen it done before, and she felt some disgust.

"Why is a dead king taken from his grave and brought back into the world of life, my uncle?" she asked.

"It is not a king," answered Abi, "but only the body of some simple person, upon whose head a crown has been put in honour of Pharaoh, our guest."

"It is not very polite to an old man like myself, weak

[1] Mummy=dead body kept from decaying by cleaning, drying, and wrapping up in cloth.



Slaves came bearing the mummy of a dead man.

and ill and not far from death," said Pharaoh. "I do not need to be reminded of what is waiting for me and for all of us."

He leaned back in his chair and sighed. Then Tua looked at him anxiously. Abi ordered the mummy to be taken away.

"I apologize," he said, "for this ancient custom of Memphis. Memphis, unlike Thebes, does not change its ways."

"It is time," said Tua angrily, "that these customs were changed. Now Pharaoh is weary and we ask your permission to depart."

D. Then Prince Abi stood up and raised his great golden cup and said, "Before we depart let us drink a welcome to the great Pharaoh, who for the first time has visited our city. Nor can we hope that when his visit is ended he will return again, since he is weak and aged. But the gods have given him a beautiful daughter who will reign after him. We drink to the Queen Neter Tua, and hope that before she departs from among us she will find a husband whose strength and energy will help to support her in the sad hour when she finds herself alone."

When all the people understood the inner meaning of this speech they rose and cheered (as they had been ordered) and shouted, "We know the man. Take him and rule for ever."

"What do they mean?" said Pharaoh. "I do not understand. Thank them, my daughter."

Tua stood up and looked around her with flashing eyes.

"My father and I thank you for your greeting. As for the words which Prince Abi has spoken, we do not understand them. I pray that Pharaoh may rule this land for

many years. And if he departs and I remain, know, O people, that you have nothing to fear from the weakness or inexperience of your Queen, and also that I seek no husband. And when I seek a husband I will not find one within the walls of Memphis. I wish you all good night."

E. Neter Tua turned and took her father by the hand. When Tua reached the tower she called Asti and said, "Tell me, what did Abi mean?"

"If you cannot guess, you are duller than I thought," answered Asti. "But I will try to translate. Prince Abi means that he has trapped you here and that you will not leave this place except as his wife."

Then Tua was full of fury.

"How dare he say such things!" she said. "Am I to be the wife of a man who might be my grandfather,—a man who has sons and daughters? We must leave Memphis at once."

"That is not easy. Some ceremony is planned for each of the next eight days. If Pharaoh goes away without attending them the people will be angry. Abi is very strong. He has a greater army than Pharaoh's, for he has not only his trained soldiers but also the men of the desert. We have here a guard of only five hundred men. How then can you leave Memphis without his permission? How can you even send a messenger to bring help? Nor can help reach you in less than fifty days."

F. Now when she saw the greatness of the danger Tua became quite calm.

"Why did you not warn Pharaoh?"

"I did warn him," said Asti, "and Mermes warned him. But he would not listen."

"Did he take any advice?" asked Tua.

"Yes. You know the waiting-woman Merytra who stood behind him with a fan to-night? He sometimes takes her advice," said Asti. "He took her advice about matters concerning Memphis because she was born in Memphis and always seemed to know even the most secret things of that city. What she has said in the past about it has often proved true."

"That is not surprising since her news came, no doubt, from Kaku, Abi's astrologer," said Tua.

"Yes," said Asti, "and no doubt she paid back secret for secret. So when this visit to Memphis was talked about she told the King that the soldiers were brought only to do honour to him. She said that Prince Abi was a loyal and loving subject. She said that if there was any danger she would not put herself within reach of Prince Abi since she had once run away from him. So Pharaoh believed her."

"Leave me now, Asti," said Neter Tua. "I must sleep and call upon the god Amen to help me. Perhaps in my dreams he will show me what I should do."

Fifteen

THE WAX FIGURE

A. When the feast was ended Merytra waited in the hall hiding behind a pillar. A tall figure appeared and made a sign to her. It was Kaku. She followed along many passages, then up a narrow stair. They came to a great door. They passed through it and Kaku locked it

behind them. Merytra now found herself in a richly furnished room. There were many strange-looking instruments in the room used for studying the stars, and rolls of paper covered with mysterious signs. Hanging above the table was a great ball of crystal[1] used for showing the future. Merytra sat in the chair.

"Truly, friend Kaku," she said, "you live very near the gods."

"Yes, dear Merytra. This is my half-way house to heaven. Here I see what happens above, and I tell as much of it as I think good to those below—at a price. After all these years I am glad to see you again looking as young and as pretty as ever."

Merytra smiled. Kaku filled the cups with wine.

"Drink that," said Kaku. "You do not get wine like that in Thebes."

"Yes, it is very good," said Merytra, when she had drunk it, "but heady. Now tell me, old friend, am I safe in this place? I do not mean safe from Pharaoh, for he trusts me, but from Prince Abi. He may remember hitting me and how I paid him back."

"He never knew that it was you, Merytra, who told Pharaoh about his plot."

B. "And you will not tell him, will you?" said Merytra.

"Oh, no. Not if we continue to agree as well as at present. And now you are rested, let us talk about business." Kaku went to the door and made sure that it was locked. Then he sat down in front of Merytra so that the light fell upon her face, while his face remained in shadow.

"This is a big business, Merytra. And I do not know that I shall trust you. You tricked me once and you have

[1] Crystal = a rock which looks like glass.

tricked Pharaoh for years. If you are false you shall die horribly. Will you swear to be true?"

"If I help you, what am I to get?"

"Me!" answered Kaku.

"Thank you," she said. "But what else?"

"The greatest honour and power in Egypt as the wife of the new Pharaoh's vizier."

She thought for a moment, then answered, "I will swear, but you must swear also to keep your part of the promise."

"Now stand up," said Kaku.

She obeyed. From a hidden place in the wall Kaku brought out an iron box in which there was a book.

C. "This book was written by the greatest of all magicians," said Kaku. "He lived before Mena, King of Egypt. I took it from his bones. And when I took it the magician's Ka rose up and threatened me. And now take it to your breast and swear."

She said the words after him.

At the end Merytra said, "You have left out a part of your promise, my friend. You must promise that I shall be the only wife of Pharaoh's vizier, and hold equal power with him."

"I forgot," said Kaku, and added the words.

When Merytra looked up again she saw a strange red light like blood in the crystal ball which hung above her head, and in the light was an eye which seemed to watch her. Then the eye vanished and the red light faded, and in the ball Merytra saw Queen Neter Tua sitting with a crown on her head, while all the nations bowed down to her: by her side sat a man dressed as a king, but she could not see his face.

D. "What do you see?" said Kaku.

She told him. He thought for a moment, then said doubtfully, "I think that is a good sign, but why is his face hidden?"

"I do not know," said Merytra. "Now tell me the plan; and put a cloth over that crystal for I do not want to see any more pictures."

"It seems a pity since you have such a gift of crystal-gazing," he said. But he put a piece of cloth over the ball.

"Now," he said, "I will tell you. My fat master Abi means to be Pharaoh, King of Egypt. And it seems that the best way to do this is by marrying Queen Neter Tua."

"I should be sorry for the husband who marries her against her will," said Merytra. "She has more strength in her than all the magicians in Egypt. She is a daughter of Amen."

"What happens after the marriage is Abi's business," said Kaku. "Our business is to get him married. Will she agree to the marriage?"

"Certainly not!" said Merytra. "People say that she loves Rames, who fought and killed the Prince of Kesh before her eyes."

"Queens are not supposed to fall in love," said Kaku. "Does she suspect?"

"I do not know; but Asti her nurse, the mother of Rames, is suspicious. She is a greater magician than you are, Kaku."

E. "Well," said Kaku, "what Asti knows the Queen will know. She is stronger than Pharaoh. She may escape from Memphis and make war on Abi. So Pharaoh must be made to stay here, for his daughter will not desert him."

"How can you make him stay here, Kaku? Not by . . ."

"No. No blood! He must not even seem to be a prisoner."

"How, then?" said Merytra. "Poison?"

"No. That is too dangerous. Look here, Merytra. I have something to show you."

He opened a box and showed a little figure the length of a man's hand. It was made of wax. It was just like Pharaoh and had on it the crown of Egypt.

"This is a magic figure," said Kaku. "Lay this figure in Pharaoh's bed, so that the breath of Pharaoh goes into it. Then say, 'O figure, as your limbs waste away, so shall Pharaoh's limbs waste away.' Then hold the figure over the lamp until it is half melted. Then take the rest of it away to your own room and hide it there. During the night the legs of Pharaoh will become useless to him, and he will be unable to move."

"I cannot do that," said Merytra. "It is black magic."

Kaku led her to the open window.

"If you do not do it I shall do black magic to you. Your senses will leave you and you will fall down from this tower into the street."

Merytra looked down. The houses below seemed small and far away.

"I will obey," she said.

Sixteen

PRINCE ABI ASKS FOR NETER TUA

A. Next day, when Asti came to dress the Queen, she asked if Amen had given her the idea which she looked for.

"No," said the Queen. "All he gave me was very bad dreams, and in every one of them was that servant-woman of my father, Merytra. If I believed in magic signs I should say that she was about to bring some evil upon us."

"That may be," said Asti. "But if that is so, I think she has begun. As I watched through the little window of my room I saw Merytra come across the courtyard at midnight, and she was carrying something."

"From where did she come?"

"From the city, I suppose. I told Mermes to question the officer of the guard. He said that she came to the gate accompanied by a tall man. He described the man, and I think it was Kaku, the astrologer."

"That is bad news," said Neter Tua. "What else have you to tell?"

"Only this, O Queen. The gates of the city are guarded more closely than ever. I tried to send a messenger to Thebes this morning, but Abi's soldiers would not let him go."

B. "Ha!" cried Neter Tua. "Before I have been Queen for a year every gate shall be broken down, and the captains of these soldiers shall be sent to work in the desert.—But such threats are foolishness. I will not threaten. When the time comes I will strike. Can I see Pharaoh?"

"No, Queen. He is meeting the lords of Memphis until it is time to start for the ceremony in the temple."

The ceremony was very long. First there was a long drive through the crowded shouting streets. They went to lay the first stone of a new temple. In a hole in the stone they put little pots of offerings and models of working men's tools, then a ring from Pharaoh's hand. Two great stones were lowered upon the first. Then the plan of the temple was shown to Pharaoh, and Pharaoh gave gifts to those who made it. Then they drove back again—a long drive round the walls of Memphis, stopping at all the temples of the gods on the way. Pharaoh was very weary. When he got back he had to sit in the courtyard and meet various people. When these meetings came to an end Abi said that he wished to see Pharaoh privately. So they went into the inner courtyard and sat down there.

C. Pharaoh, the Queen, some councillors, Mermes, some of the women, amongst whom were Asti and Merytra, were there. With Abi was Kaku, two of his sons, and some of his officers of government.

"What is your prayer?" asked Pharaoh.

"A great one, your majesty," answered the Prince. "And I hope that for your own good and my good and the good of Egypt you will grant it. I ask you to give the hand of Queen Neter Tua in marriage."

"Queen Neter Tua sits by my side," said Pharaoh, "and shares my task of ruling this kingdom. Her mind is my mind. If she approves, I approve. You should ask her."

Abi turned to the Queen, put his hand on his heart, and said, "Burning love of your majesty moves me . . ."

"I pray you," said Tua, "correct those words which

should begin, 'The burning love of your majesty's power and wealth moves me . . .'"

Abi looked angry, but everyone else smiled. He began his speech again, but in a confused way, and soon Tua stopped him for the second time.

"I am not deaf, most noble Prince," she said. "I heard what you said to Pharaoh."

"I put a plain question to you, and I think it is worthy of a plain answer. I think it is time you were married and I offer myself as your husband."

Tua turned aside and spoke to an aged councillor.

"In what year was Prince Abi born?" she said. "Was it in the same year as yourself?"

The councillor did not answer, but hid himself amongst the others.

D. "But I have much to offer," said Abi. "The desert people are restless and dangerous, but if I am king they will be loyal, and the North and South will be more closely united than ever before. But if this marriage does not take place . . ."

Kaku touched Abi's hand as a signal that he was saying too much.

"Go on, I pray you," said Tua. "If it does not happen, what then?"

"There may be trouble, O Queen.—Leave me alone, Kaku. I will speak the truth, whatever happens.—Pharaoh, you have reigned for many years. You have only one child. And this child is so unlike you that many question whether she has any right to sit on the throne. If I do not marry her these whisperings may become a wind which will blow the crown from off her head."

A cry of fear and wonder arose at this bold and disloyal speech. Tua bent forward as if to answer. But

before she said a word Pharaoh sprang up, mad with rage.

"I have suffered you too long," said Pharaoh. "I am sorry that I spared you so many years ago in Thebes. Is it for this that I raised you to great honour to rule almost like a king over my city of Memphis? Was it not enough that you, an old man, the son of a slave, an evil liver, have dared to ask for the hand of Egypt's Queen; but must I also hear you speak evil about her birth?—Mermes, call my guards, seize Prince Abi and hold him. We shall leave for Thebes tomorrow, and he shall be judged according to our law."

E. Mermes blew a call on the silver whistle which hung round his neck. Then he seized Abi by the arm. The guards ran in with lifted spears. Leaping upon Abi they tore the sword from his hand.

"Bind him and keep him safe," said Pharaoh. "Tomorrow he goes with us to Thebes."

Now it happened that in the confusion Merytra was pushed against Kaku.

"Listen," he said. "Do as I ordered, and all will be well."

"I obey," said Merytra.

The guards took Kaku by the arm and pushed him out of the temple together with the sons of Abi.

An hour later Mermes and Asti stood before Pharaoh, and prayed him to leave Memphis that same night.

"Tomorrow, when I have slept, will be time enough," said Pharaoh. "Why should I fly from my own city like a thief?"

F. "For this reason," said Mermes. "We believe there is a plan to keep you here. This afternoon you could not

have gone if you had tried. Tonight Abi is a prisoner: so the people are confused and may open the gates. But tomorrow a leader may be found and the gates shut again."

"What?" said the King. "Do you mean that I am a prisoner here in Egypt where I rule? No, my friends. Those gates will open at Pharaoh's order, for if they do not I will pull down Memphis stone by stone. We march tomorrow, not before."

"O Pharaoh," said Asti, "do not be angry with him. As you know, I have some magic power and know the future. The ghost of Ahura came to me in the night and said, 'Great danger threatens Pharaoh and our daughter. Fly from Memphis. A great enemy is near his throne; and there is a magician with whom she made an agreement last night.' I believe that that enemy is Merytra, and the magician is Kaku, whom Merytra visited last night."

"What!" said Pharaoh, laughing, "that old astrologer with the painted cap? Why, he is only a spy who has been in my pay for years, and Merytra warned me of Abi's foolish plot years ago. Asti, do not be deceived. It was jealousy that whispered this in your ears, not the ghost of Ahura."

"Pharaoh has spoken," said Asti in her quiet voice.

Seventeen

THE DEATH OF PHARAOH

A. That night Tua could not sleep. Whenever she shut her eyes terrible visions rose up before them, and in those visions Abi always played a part. At last she opened her eyes and gazed at the darkness, and out of the darkness came voices telling of death and war. She put her fingers in her ears and tried to fix her thoughts on Rames. What would be his fate? If Rames were dead, what would she do? What use would it be to be Queen of Egypt if Rames were dead?

She got out of bed and went up a narrow stair to the room where Asti slept. She heard Asti's voice speaking, saying prayers. She pushed open the door and entered. By the light of a little lamp she saw Asti with her hands raised up to heaven. Then Asti saw Tua.

"I am calling on the spirits to save us, O Queen," she said. "We are in great danger. The night is full of magic —black magic. I smell it in the air. Why do you not sleep?"

"I cannot sleep. I am full of fear. I wish we had never come to Memphis," said Neter Tua.

"Do not be afraid, Lady," said Asti. "Tomorrow morning we shall march. Pharaoh has given orders. And as for Abi, he is in prison."

"There is no prison that will hold him. Why did not my father kill him? Then we should be free of him and I could never marry him."

B. As she spoke these words somewhere from far below there came a cry. There was a sound of feet on the stairs.

"What has happened?" cried Asti, leaping to the door.

"Pharaoh is dead or dying," answered a terrified voice.

They ran down the narrow stair till they came to Pharaoh's room. There he lay on his bed, and round him stood his doctors. He could not speak, but his eyes were open. He knew his daughter. He raised his hand and pointed to his feet.

"What is the matter?" she asked the chief doctor.

He lifted the bedclothes and showed Pharaoh's legs and feet, white and withered.

"What sickness is this?" asked Tua.

"We do not know," said the doctor. "We have never seen anything like it."

"I know," said Asti. "This is not sickness, it is magic. Prince Abi or one of his magicians has done this. Who saw him last?"

"It was the lady Merytra sung him to sleep," answered the doctor. "She left him about two hours ago. When I came in to see how his majesty was, I found him thus.

Then Neter Tua lifted her head and spoke. "My father is helpless. Therefore I rule the kingdom. Let Prince Abi be brought, for I wish to question him at once. Let the waiting-woman Merytra be brought."

The captain of the guard bowed and departed to carry out the Queen's orders. Soon the captain came back.

"O Queen," he said, "do not be afraid. Prince Abi has gone. He has escaped, and the woman Merytra has gone also."

"How did this happen?" asked Neter Tua.

C. "About an hour ago Merytra came to the gate and showed Pharaoh's ring to the officer. With her there was

a fat man, dressed as a camel-driver: it is believed that this man was Prince Abi, and that he escaped from his prison by some secret passage."

"Shut the gate," said Tua. "Let no one pass in or out. Asti, take men with you and search the room where Merytra slept."

Asti went, and after a time she came back carrying something wrapped in a cloth.

"O Queen, I have found this under her bed."

"What is it?" asked Tua. "The mummy of a child?"

"No, Queen, it is the wax figure of a man."

She opened the cloth and showed the figure shaped to the exact image of Pharaoh, but the legs were melted. Neter Tua went into Pharaoh's room and looked at Pharaoh. He seemed to be asleep. Then he awoke and looked around him. His lips moved, and suddenly his voice came.

"Magic!" he said. "Avenge me, O my daughter."

His head fell back and the peace of death came upon him. Tua kissed him, and then she knelt by his side in prayer.

Then she stood up and said, "Make it known that Pharaoh is dead, and that I rule alone in Egypt."

Eighteen

THE BATTLE IN THE TEMPLE

A. In the morning the doctors came and made ready the body of Pharaoh. While they were doing this Tua consulted with her officers as to what should be done. One of them suggested that they should break through the wall of the temple and escape to the ships which lay on the Nile beneath them. This plan was approved. But when they went to begin the work, it was seen that the ships were already seized and were sailing away up the river. So there were only two things to be done; either to wait in the old temple and send out messages for help; or to march through the city, break open the gates, and march to some loyal town.

At last the Queen said, "I will not stay here and starve,[1] as we must do before the army can be gathered to save us. Rather than do that I would die fighting in the streets. We march at midnight."

The criers standing on the high towers proclaimed Neter Tua Queen of Egypt. Of the people who listened below, some cheered, but most remained silent, fearing Prince Abi.

B. Night came at last. At a signal the gates were opened. The small body of guards went out, followed by the councillors carrying the body of Pharaoh. The priests and the singers came afterwards, singing a funeral song. Then came slaves carrying the baggage, and behind them soldiers, in the midst of whom was the Queen, and with her Asti. The great square in front of the temple was

[1] Starve = die for lack of food.

empty. They crossed it. The councillors carrying the body entered a street leading to the main gate a mile away. The guard were just going to enter the street when there appeared great companies of men.

A voice cried, "Stop!"

The guards shaped themselves in a square round the Queen. Four men came forward and demanded in the name of Prince Abi that the Queen should be given to Prince Abi, who would treat her with all honour, and said that those who accompanied her might go free. These men were the four sons of Abi.

C. Mermes gave the message to Neter Tua.

"Answer that the Queen of Egypt does not give herself into the hands of murderers. Attack them and kill them all," said Neter Tua.

Mermes went forward and gave the answer. The next moment a flight of arrows from the Queen's guard killed the four sons of Abi. Then the fight began, the fiercest fight there had been in Egypt for many years. The royal guard was small, but they were chosen men and they were mad with despair and rage. And the Queen fought with them, charged with them, and in the moonlight was seen like an angry goddess in her chariot, shooting arrows with her bow. But it was useless. The men of Abi were too many. Slowly the royal guards were pressed back, first to the walls of the temple, then to the outer court. Then all who were left of them, some fifty men under the command of Mermes, tried to hold the gate. They fought madly, but one by one went down to death under the rain of spears. Tua got down from her chariot. She watched the battle with Asti as her side. With a shout, the soldiers of Abi ran through the gate, killing as they came.

Now surrounded by all who remained, only ten or twelve men, the Queen's party was driven in through the halls to the stairs of the tower. Here a last stand was made. Step by step they held the stairs until only Tua, Asti and Mermes, her husband, were left. They were now near the door of the Queen's room. The attackers paused for a moment. Captain Mermes turned and kissed his wife and bowed to the Queen.

"What a man may do, I have done; and now I go to make a report to Pharaoh. I leave you to the care of Amen, and to my son Rames I leave the work of vengeance."

Then shouting the war-cry of his fathers, the Pharaohs who had once ruled in Egypt, Mermes ran upon the advancing enemy and was killed.

"Come with me, O wife of a very brave soldier," said Tua.

"Not wife," said Asti, "widow."

D. They went up the steps to the top of the tower. Asti sank to the ground weeping. Tua walked to the edge of the tower awaiting the end. It was the moment of sunrise. The sun rose out of the edge of the desert into a clear sky. There, on that high tower, in shining armour, stood Tua, and the sun's rays turned her into a figure of fire set above a world of shadow. The thousands of people watching from the streets below raised a shout of wonder, "The daughter of Amen. See her clothed in the glory of the god."

"Seize her," said Abi.

But the soldiers looked and drew back. "We are afraid," they said.

Then Neter Tua spoke. "Come one step nearer to me," she said, "and before your eyes and the eyes of these

people I shall throw myself down into the waters of the Nile. But before I go to join the dead Pharaoh I lay my curse upon you, and the spirit of Pharaoh and his servants whom you have killed shall be with you in your sleep. All through your life you shall fly from a shadow; and you shall fall at last into a death of shame."

Abi shook with fury.

"So let it be," he cried. "If I have nothing more to fear I shall do my worst. Pharaoh, my enemy, is dead. If you do not marry me of your own free will, you shall stay in this tower, and starve."

He turned and went away. Neter Tua took Asti by the arm and led her into her room.

Nineteen

THE COMING OF THE KA

A. Six days had passed. Neter Tua had had nothing to eat except some honey which Asti had taken from some bees that lived at the top of the tower. Now that honey was finished. In later years, in memory of its help, she chose the bee as her royal sign, but never again did she eat honey. She had some jars of water, but these were now finished also.

"Come, Asti," said Tua. "Let us go up on to the roof and watch the setting sun, perhaps for the last time."

So they went, supporting each other's steps. From this place they could see the temple ringed by a double ring of soldiers, and behind them thousands of people who

knew that the Queen was accustomed to appear at the top of the tower at sunset. From these people a sound arose like the murmur of the sea. Then there was a deep silence, because they dared not tell the pity which they felt.

"They dare not help us. Let us lie down and die," said Tua.

"No, Queen," said Asti. "Do you remember the words spoken by the spirit of Ahura? The magic which the Queen Ahura whispered to me may be used once only; it may be used now."

"Then use it," answered Tua, "if you have the power. But whom will you call—the god Amen, the spirit of Ahura, or the ghost of Pharaoh?"

"None of these," answered Asti. "Lie down and sleep. For I have much to do in the hours of darkness. When you awake you will learn all."

B. Tua lay down on the bed. Asti took her thin hand and began to sing. Tua's eyes closed. Her breath came slow and deep. Then Asti said prayers. Then she said the words which Ahura had whispered to her. As she said these wild voices cried through the night. The tower shook. The crystal ball of Kaku was broken. And in an unknown terror Abi sprang from his bed.

Neter Tua awoke. The first grey light of morning came through the window. Her eyes, searching the darkness, fell first upon Asti sleeping in a chair, her head resting upon her hand. Then a brightness drew her eyes to the foot of the bed. There, clothed in a faint white light, and wearing the double crown, she saw—herself! It was her Ka. From the lips of the Ka came a soft voice.

"I am your servant to command. What do you wish me to do? I am here to do your will."

Her Ka stood at the foot of the bed.

"My will?" she said. "My will? Oh, come. Let me think. I want a drink of water and some bread."

"They are there," said the Ka, pointing to the table beside the bed.

She ate and drank.

Then she cried, "Oh, how selfish I am. I have eaten and drunk everything, leaving nothing for my mother Asti."

C. "There is more for Asti," answered the Ka. "But surely there are other wishes in your heart?"

"Yes. I wish for vengeance upon Abi."

"I am your servant," answered the Ka. "It shall be done—such vengeance as you cannot dream of, vengeance poured drop by drop like poison into his blood: the pain of disappointed love, of power given and taken away, of a horrible fear and a death of shame. Is there not another wish in your heart?"

"Yes," said Tua. "But I may not speak it even to myself in sleep."

"That wish shall be granted, O Morning Star," said the Ka. "You shall find your love far away, and he shall return with you, and you two shall rule in Egypt."

Then Tua called out, "Awake, Asti! For my Ka has come."

Then Asti opened her eyes and she saw the beautiful figure, and stood up.

"Hear me," said the Ka, "for the time is short. You are prisoners here, and Abi is awaiting the end. If the Queen lives he will take her for his wife, and if she dies he will take the crown of Egypt. Soon Abi will come to ask whether the Queen wishes to be his wife, or whether she will stay here until she dies. Now I will stay here and be his wife—oh, such a wife as never a man had before.

For he will marry a ghost who hates him and is commanded to destroy him."

D. "So you will sit in my seat, O Ka, and Abi will sit on my throne. But what of Egypt and my people?" said Tua.

"Do not fear for Egypt and your people," said the Ka. "All will be well with them until you come to claim them."

"But what of Asti and myself?" asked Tua.

"You may trust yourselves to the waters of the Nile," she answered.

The Ka pointed to the open window. Far below ran the white waters of the river.

"No one can fall so far and live," said Tua.

"Do you think so, O Morning Star? Without your faith I can do nothing. Do as I tell you, or let me go. Choose now, for he is coming."

As she spoke they heard the gates of the temple open.

"I have chosen," Tua said. "It shall never be said that Pharaoh's daughter was a coward."

"Where my lady goes, I follow," said Asti.

They stood together in the narrow window place with their arms about each other. A wind seemed to rush past them and drag their hair, and they knew no more.

Twenty

THE DREAM OF ABI

A. On the night when the Ka of Neter Tua came, Merytra was sitting in the room of Kaku.

"Why do you look so disturbed?" said Kaku. "All has gone well. That figure has done its work thoroughly."

"Very thoroughly," said Merytra in an angry voice. "You have tricked me, magician. I had promised you to wither Pharaoh's legs, and not to murder him. The Queen and Asti know the truth; they will burn me as a magician and send me to the under-world with the blood of Pharaoh on my hands—Pharaoh who never did me anything but good. Why did he die?"

Kaku did not seem to know. He stood up.

"Why do you trouble about the future, fair one?" he said. "It is a long way away. We grieve for the death of Pharaoh, and we grieve for the death of Abi's four sons. But things have gone well with us. Today I received a letter appointing me vizier as soon as Abi becomes king, and today you have received from me the name of wife, as I promised you should. Merytra, you are the wife of Kaku, the great vizier, chief adviser of the King of Egypt."

B. "Listen, Kaku, I am afraid. You say that you are a magician and can read the future. Well, I wish to know the future. Show it me in that magic crystal ball."

The crystal ball was set upon the table, and they gazed into it. For a long time Merytra saw nothing. Then a shadow came. It cleared away and showed the dead Pharaoh as a mummy. As Merytra drew back Pharaoh seemed to loosen his hands from a cloth that bound them

and struck outwards. The crystal ball broke, so that the pieces flew about the room, and one of the pieces struck Merytra on the mouth, knocking out two of her teeth.

"It seems," said Kaku in a shaking voice, "that the gods deny us knowledge of the future. Be content with the present, Merytra."

"Content with the present!" she cried. "Look what it has given me—a mouthful of blood and teeth. I, who was beautiful, am spoilt for ever."

Then she sprang at Kaku, pulled off his cap and beat his head with it.

C. At this moment the door opened, and white with terror and half clothed, Prince Abi appeared.

"What is the matter? Is this how you study the stars?"

"It is only a little quarrel, O Prince," said Kaku. "This woman whom I married had an accident and is angry."

"It was his magic," said Merytra. "He made the dead Pharaoh break the crystal and throw the pieces at me."

"Is the spirit of Pharaoh everywhere?" said Abi. "I came to speak to you about Pharaoh. As I lay on my bed a terrible dream came to me. I felt a weight on my bed, and I turned to see who it was: it was the body of Pharaoh. He said, 'I have a message for you from the gods. This is the message: go to the Temple of Sekhet in the morning and there you will find the Queen. Marry it and rule the land of Egypt until you meet Rames, the son of Mermes whom you murdered, and with him a beggar who has a message for you. Take my body to the grave which I have prepared for it. Then sit in my seat with the Queen which you have married, and do all that it tells you to do. But hasten. Make for yourself a grave, and let it be near my own.' . . .

D. "Now tell me," said Abi, "what does this dream mean? It was you who set me on this path, and you shall keep me safe in it or you shall die."

"It is true, O Prince, that it was I that set you on this path," said Kaku, "and it is true that I have kept you safe in it. In the future, as in the past, with me you stand or fall. As to this dream, I find its meaning good. It seems that you will marry the Queen of Egypt, and as her husband, rule the land of Egypt. Are not these the things which you desire?"

"Yes, Kaku. But what about Rames and the grave which I was told to make ready?"

"Rames? He is the man who killed the Prince of Kesh. If he ever comes back with his beggar you can hang him. I care nothing for Rames."

"But what about Pharaoh's talk about graves?"

"Since he is dead he would talk about graves."

"But why did Pharaoh speak of the Queen as 'it'?" asked Abi.

For a moment Kaku paused, for the question was hard to answer.

Then he said, "Because I believe this Queen is more than a woman, for she is a daughter of Amen."

E. "Perhaps you are right," said Abi. "But if I try to force my way into the tower where she is, she will kill herself; and if I leave her there any longer she will die. And the people are beginning to murmur: they will not allow the Queen who is young and beautiful to die miserably. Last night at sunset they gathered in tens of thousands to hear her sing her evening prayer. And then they marched past my palace shouting, 'Give food to the Queen, or we will break in and save her.' By this time the news must have reached to Thebes and a great army

will be gathering to set her free. What am I to do?"

"Do as Pharaoh told you in your dream. Go to the temple and there you will find the Queen obedient to your wishes."

So in the early morning Prince Abi dressed in his finest clothes, and accompanied by his councillors, went to the Temple of Sekhet. They went through the narrow courtyard and up the narrow stairs. Kaku went on in front while the officers pushed the huge Abi up the stairs. When they were half-way up they stopped.

"Do not hurry," said Abi. "If we frighten her she may throw herself into the Nile as she promised to do. Let me call to her."

So Abi called, "O Queen, do not die for want of food in this miserable place, but come down and live in plenty with your faithful subject."

F. There was no answer.

"She must have died, and Egypt will call for vengeance. Kaku, go up and see what has happened. You are a magician and have nothing to fear."

But Kaku was afraid. He went up step by step saying prayers. He came to the door of the Queen's room. He looked into the room and found it empty. Then he went to the other room and found it empty too. He went up on to the roof and there too there was no one. So he returned and told Abi.

"Either she has escaped," said Abi, "or she has sought death in the Nile. So much for what you said about my dream, O fool!"

"Wait till you are sure before you call me names," said Kaku. "Let us search the temple."

So they searched the temple until they came to the inner hall where Pharaoh had set his throne while they

were staying in Memphis. It was a dark place into which the light came only through the small windows in the roof. Now at the time of sunrise it was very dark. The searchers felt their way from pillar to pillar, seeing nothing. Then a ray of sunlight came through a window in the eastern wall and fell upon the throne. There they saw Neter Tua, Queen of Egypt, sitting in Pharaoh's throne. She looked glorious, a figure of flame set in the midst of the darkness. But there was something terrible in her eyes so that the men drew back.

G. At last Kaku gathered courage and said to Abi, "O Prince, there is your bride. Come now and take her."

Then Abi went forward.

Suddenly a clear voice spoke, "What are you doing here, O Lord of Memphis? Ha! I see you also, Kaku, the magician. But where is Merytra? Is she waiting while her lips heal?"

"How did you learn these things? Have you spies in my palace?" said Abi.

"Yes. I have spies in your palace and everywhere. And now you have come to lead me away to be your wife, have you not? Well, I am ready. Do it, if you dare."

"Why should I not dare, O Queen?" said Abi.

"Tell me," answered the Queen. "Why did the magic ball break in Kaku's room last night? Why did you have that strange dream about which you asked Kaku, of which Kaku knows nothing? Amen gives me sight of the future, and I know all things. But they would not sound pleasant."

"Tell me, O Queen," said Abi, "where is Asti?"

"I have sent her to Thebes to see to some business of mine. I have ordered her to cut the history of the murder of Pharaoh on the walls of his grave."

At these words the courage of the company faded and they began to walk backwards towards the door.

"What!" said the Queen. "Would you leave me here alone? Do my power and my wisdom frighten you? Prince Abi, I can tell you this of the future. There will be a royal marriage in Memphis, and during your time you will sit by Egypt's Queen and shine in her light. Have you not earned the place by right of blood, and did not Pharaoh promise it to you? Come, the sun of this new day shines. Let us walk in it and go out from the shadows."

Twenty-one

THE MARRIAGE OF ABI

A. A strange story spread through Memphis. It was said that the Queen had yielded, and she was already at the Prince's house waiting for the wedding. People quarrelled about it in the streets. The men said that it could not be true that this great lady would take her father's murderer as her husband. Would she not rather die? In their hearts they thought that she ought to die, and leave a story to the world of which Egypt could be proud for ever; but the women thought differently: they thought that she should not throw away long years of being Queen, and that any place was better than the grave.

Then the matter was settled. A proclamation was made in the city saying that the marriage would be held in the temple of Hathor one hour before sunset, and they would afterwards show themselves to the people in the hall of

the Prince's house. Then the women laughed and the men were silent.

B. The time came. The hall was filled with people, and the square and the streets outside were crowded. At the top of the hall there were two thrones, the greater and richer throne for the Prince, and the less good one for the Queen. Kaku said that he should show that from the first it was he that ruled and not Pharaoh's daughter.

There was a sound of music. The officers proclaimed to the people that the Prince and the Queen had been married in the temple of Hathor. They passed from the temple into the great hall of the Prince's house, there to show themselves to the people. First came the priests singing as they walked, followed by servants. Then, surrounded by his officers and guards came Prince Abi himself, and Kaku was with him. People could see that the Prince was not at ease: he stood there bowing to their shouts, but his lips were white and his hands were shaking. But he stood there bowing till the shouts had stopped. The people were waiting for the Queen.

"Look! There she is!"

She stood alone in front of the two thrones. But she was very different from what they had expected. She wore only a simple white dress, without any ornaments except the crown. The people had expected to see a woman weak and pale, her eyes red with grief, a woman who had been tamed by hunger and fear of death which she had escaped by marrying her conqueror. But it was not so. She had never seemed half so beautiful. Her deep blue eyes looked through them as if they read the secret of everyone. She was not thin and wasted, but her cheeks had the glow of health.

C. The people gazed at the Queen. She answered them with her calm eyes till their heads sank beneath their gaze. Then in a deep silence she turned. Two officers stepped forward to lead her to her seat. But she waved them back.

"No," she said. "I am alone. There is no one here who has the right to show me my place, so I shall take it myself."

Then very slowly she went to the greater throne which had been prepared for Abi, and sat there, and waited. There was a murmuring among Abi's officers. Abi gave orders which all seemed to fear to carry out. At last he stepped forward himself to the Queen.

"Lady," he said, "perhaps you do not know it, but that place is mine. Your seat is on my left."

"Why so, Prince Abi?" she asked quietly.

"Because the husband is higher than the wife, and the conqueror than the conquered."

"Should you not have said, 'The murderer than the descendant of the murdered'?" she said. "No, Prince Abi, you are wrong. The Queen is greater than her subject, even if she has given him the name of husband. Come now, and do honour to your Queen, and show that you are her loyal servant."

Then there was a great noise, for most of the people in that place had taken part in the crime, and knew that if Neter Tua won, death waited for them. They shouted to Abi to take no notice of her, to tear her from her place, and to seize the crown. They drew their swords and raged like an angry sea. Those who were loyal to Pharaoh and those who were afraid of trouble pressed backward through the crowd until Tua had no friend left in the hall.

D. In the hall there were many wild people of the desert, descendants of the Hyksos, whose blood was in Abi's body. Abi was their hope. They expected him to put into their hands the wealth of Egypt. But on Abi's throne there was a woman who stood between them and their hopes.

"Tear her to pieces," they cried. "She is a magician. If you are afraid, let us come."

"You see," said Abi to the Queen, "our people do not trust you. I cannot hold them back very long. Do you still wish me to do honour to you?"

"Why not?" she said. "I have spoken, and the words of Pharaoh may not be changed."

Then the Prince ordered his guards to pull her from the throne. The Queen stood there for a moment with her hands clasped, seeming as if she did not know what to do.

"Be a good girl and obey your husband," cried a mocking voice.

There was a shout of laughter. Tua looked at the speaker, one of Abi's officers who had taken a great part in the battle against Pharaoh's guard. She looked at him very strangely. Those standing near saw his lips go white, and had it not been for the crowd around him he would have fallen. Then he said that the heat was too great, and he went and stood by the door.

E. Then the Queen spoke in a strong clear voice, "There is a question between you and me, O people; shall I rule in Egypt, or that man who is my husband? Now you people with Hyksos blood wish that he should rule, and you wish me to be his servant."

"We will not take you as Queen," cried one of them. "So long as those pillars stand, which were set up by

the Hyksos Kings of Egypt, we will not take you as our Queen."

Then Tua raised her arms and her eyes to heaven and said, "Hear me, Amen, great god. Show yourself that these people may know your will."

She stood and gazed at the glory of the sinking sun, and all those in the hall gazed at it too. It was a very strange sunset. There was a terrible stillness. Nothing seemed to move in all the city; no dog barked, no child cried, no leaf trembled on the tall trees. It might have been a city of the dead. Dark clouds arose and moved across the sky: they took strange shapes, like armies with shining spears, and one cloud, higher than the rest, looked like a woman, with her hair spread out behind her. And some of the people said, "It is Isis with the moon in her arms."

F. Kaku began to whisper in Abi's ear. There was fear in their eyes. He pointed with his finger to two stars. Then there came a great wind sweeping over the gardens, over the river banks, and bending the trees. The clouds rushed together. The sun had gone down until nothing was left but a little edge of fire. Then the voice of Neter Tua could be heard:

"See now the sword of Amen!"

As she spoke there was a great flash of lightning and the earth shook. There was a cry of terror followed by the crash of falling stones. The two great pillars of the Hyksos Kings had fallen on to the heads of those who were watching beneath them, killing hundreds. The head of one of them was thrown right into the circle of priests; it was the head of the one who had mocked the Queen. And in the light they saw Neter Tua seated on her throne: she was laughing.

The crowd fled madly from the hall, treading upon each other, fighting to escape. Inside the hall the priests lay on their faces, each praying to his god for mercy. In front of the throne, the crown shaken from his head, lay Abi. And the Queen sat on her throne and laughed.

G. The clouds rolled away. The stars shone out, filling the place with gentle light.

Then Tua spoke. "Tell me now, my husband," she said, "who is the god of Egypt?"

"The god Amen."

"Who is Pharaoh in Egypt?"

"You are, O Queen."

"Arise, you priests and officers," said the Queen. "See your Prince do honour to the Queen of Egypt."

They stood up, trembling. She pointed to her foot. Abi knelt down and kissed her shoe. After him followed the priests and captains. At last came Kaku. But she would not allow him to touch her.

"How is it," she said, "that your life is spared, when for less crimes many lie dead here? You are stained with the blood of Pharaoh."

Kaku beat his head upon the ground, denying the crime, and yet at the same time praying for pardon.

"See!" she cried, "Know that your life is spared for a time, and Merytra's. Look at me, magician, and tell me who I am."

Their eyes met, and he could not turn his eyes away.

"Come," she said, "between us two there should be no secrets. I will tell you something. I will tell you who I am. But the moment you repeat it will be the moment of your death. Now listen to me, O maker of wax images."

She bent down and whispered in his ear. At the next instant, with horror on his face, Kaku was seen to fall

The two great pillars of the Hyksos kings had fallen on the heads of those below.

back, and had not Abi caught him he would have fallen down the steps leading to the throne.

"What did she say?"

Kaku made no answer. He tore himself away and fled.

Twenty-two

ABI LEARNS THE TRUTH

A. A month had gone by. Kaku, the vizier, was sitting working at the public accounts of the city. It was not easy work. During the past ten days the accounts had twice been sent back to him by the Queen with awkward requests for information.

Abi had not been accustomed to ask too many questions. He recognized the right of Kaku to put some money in his pocket. But now, it seemed, things were different, and that all money received had to be paid to the Queen or accounted for. And there was a big difference, which had to be found from Kaku's private wealth. In a rage, Kaku sent for the two head collectors of taxes and ordered them to be beaten until they produced the missing money, most of which he had stolen himself. Then he went from the hall to his own office and found himself face to face with Abi. The Prince was so changed. He looked so old and miserable that in the dim light of the room Kaku failed to recognize him. Thinking he was some beggar, he cursed him and told him to go away. Then the fury of Abi broke out. He rushed at Kaku and seized him by the beard and struck him on the face.

"Dog, is it thus that you speak to your king? At least I can revenge myself on you."

"Pardon, your majesty," said Kaku. "I did not know you in these shadows. You have changed much lately."

B. "Changed!" said Abi. "Who would not have changed who suffers as I do? I was happy until I listened to your cursed advice and tried to climb into the seat of Pharaoh. I had my sons, my wives, my money, and my army. Now everything has gone. My sons are dead. My money is taken from me. My army serves another. All my power is taken from me. From morning to night I must work at tasks which I hate. I must build temples to Amen. I must dig canals. I must do things for the common people and take away their taxes. I must punish the people of the desert who have always been my friends. Next month I must make war against the King of Kita, with whom I had made a friendly agreement."

"And then?" asked Kaku.

"And then when the King of Kita has been destroyed and his people made subject to Egypt, the Queen is going to Thebes to attend to the building of my tomb, because, she says, this is a matter in which there must be no delay. Already she is making drawings for it. She is making horrible drawings which I cannot understand, and she brings them to me. And know this, my friend, that next to my tomb there is another smaller tomb for you and your wife Merytra."

C. "How can you allow it?" Kaku said. "You have been a great Prince. Now you are a woman's slave, like dirt beneath her feet. Why don't you kill her?"

"Because I dare not. You remember how the pillars fell

down, and what happened to the man who mocked the Queen?"

"Then you must suffer your fate until your tomb is ready," said Kaku.

"No," said Abi. "I have another plan. That is what I came to speak to you about. Friend Kaku, you must kill her. Your magic killed the father: it will kill the daughter also. Make a wax image."

"Shall I tell you how I should be rewarded?" said the magician. "My reward would be a slow and terrible death. Moreover, if you want to know the truth about the Queen, she cannot be killed."

"What do you mean, fool!" said Abi angrily. "Flesh and blood must bow to death."

"Certainly it is true that flesh and blood must bow to death," said Kaku. "Yes, flesh and blood."

"What do you mean?" said Abi. "You . . ."

He drew his sword.

"Prince," said Kaku, falling to his knees, "I may not, I cannot. It is a secret of the gods."

"Then go to the gods, you lying dog," answered Abi, lifting his sword.

"The Queen is coming," cried Kaku.

D. Footsteps were heard. "The Queen is coming." As Kaku spoke the door opened, and before them stood Neter Tua. She looked at the sword in Abi's hand. Then she looked at Kaku.

"Why is your sword drawn, O husband?" she asked.

"To kill you, O wife," he answered.

He cursed her and called her by evil names.

"You talk much and do little," she said at last. "Your sword is in your hand. Use it."

He rushed at her, then fell back as if he had been

struck by some unseen power. He rested against the wall, then rushed at her again. Again he fell back.

"You are not a good murderer," she said at last, "although you have had so much practice. Let Kaku try."

"O, your majesty," said Kaku. "you know that I would rather die than lift my hand against you."

"Yes," she said. "Prince Abi suggested that you should kill me, but you refused—for your own reasons."

The sword fell from Abi's hand, and there was silence.

"Before I came into the room, Abi, you were talking about how to kill me. And he did not dare to tell you why he could not kill me. But since you wish to know, you shall learn the truth. Look at me, miserable man, my husband. Look at me, slave!"

They looked at her, but what they saw they never told. They fell down on their faces and cried aloud. And when at last the cold terror had gone from their hearts they saw her as she had been, royal and beautiful.

"What are you?" cried Abi. "Are you the Queen of Death, or are you the ghost of the dead Queen sent here for vengeance?"

"Ask the magician," said the Queen. "I allow him to tell you."

"She is the Ka of Neter Tua. Neter Tua set free her Ka to bring destruction upon those who would have wronged her. She is a ghost having the power of the gods."

"Where, then, is Neter Tua?" cried Abi. "Is she dead?"

"No. She is not dead. She has gone to seek one whom she loves. When she returns with him and a certain beggar I will depart, and you will die—both of you. Until then arise, and do as I order."

Twenty-three

THE BOAT OF AMEN

A. Neter Tua opened her eyes. For some time she had lain between sleep and awaking. It seemed to her she heard the sound of oars and of water against the side of a ship. She thought that she was dreaming. No doubt she was in the palace of Thebes, and when it was light her ladies would come and waken her. Then she remembered it was many months since she had been at Thebes: she had travelled to Memphis, where many terrible things had happened to her: the murder of Pharaoh, the battle, her life as a prisoner in the tower, the coming of her Ka. Then she remembered how she stood in the window. No doubt it was all finished. She was dead. But why did she hear the sound of water and of oars? Very slowly she opened her eyes. She saw that she was in a sort of tent. There were silk curtains turned back. At her side was another figure. It was Asti.

"Asti," she said, "can you hear me?"

"Yes, Lady. I hear and see you. But where are we?"

"In the under-world, I think, Asti."

"If that is so, Lady, it is strange that we have eyes and ears and faces. Let us sit up and look."

B. So they sat up and looked through the open curtains. They were on a ship, the most beautiful ship they had ever seen. It was covered with gold and silver. They could see rowers dressed in white, seated at their oars. There was a tall man at the back, but they could not see his face. Behind him was the moon, and a wide, silvery river, and trees, and the towers of temples.

"It is the boat of Amen," said Tua, "which is carrying us to the kingdom of death behind the sun."

She sank back. Then she fell asleep again. Tua woke again. The sun was shining brightly. At her side sat Asti watching her. In front of them was a table set with delicate food.

"Tell me what happened, Asti," said Tua. "I do not know in what world we are."

"Our own world, I think," said Asti. "But this boat is a spirit boat, and spirits are guiding her.—Come, we need food. Let us eat while we may."

So they ate. When they had finished they went outside. The rowers had now gone. The purple sails were set. They were no longer sailing down a river, but along a canal with sand on either side. Then Asti looked at the desert.

C. "I think I know this canal," she said. "I sailed here as a child. It runs from Bubastis down to the sea."

"Perhaps," said Tua, "this is a real world, and we are alive. Call to the captain. Perhaps he will tell us where he is taking us."

Asti called to the captain, but he made no sign that he saw or heard her. Then they went back under the silken curtains to avoid the heat of the sun. They sat there watching the desert till at last the sun was low. Then they walked again outside. And then they ate, after which they fell asleep.

When they awoke it was daylight. The tent-like curtain had gone, and a wooden hut had been built over them. The ship was rolling onwards across a wide sea out of sight of land. Neither of them had been on the sea before. A strange feeling came over them: they slept much and ate little for three whole days and nights.

At last, one evening as the sun sank, they felt that the movement of the sea was less. They came out and saw that they had entered the mouth of a great river. There were tall trees on the banks and among the roots of the trees there were crocodiles. The men were at their oars again, rowing the ship up the river. Then they came to a sandy place and there they stopped.

D. Tua and Asti sat down to eat, and when they had finished eating, two men appeared. Their faces were covered. They were carrying two baskets. Asti began to question them, but they seemed to be deaf and dumb. They only pointed towards the shore where Tua saw a fire burning upon a rock.

"They want us to leave the ship," said Asti. "Come, Queen, let us follow our fortune."

So they went with the men and found that steps had been fixed from the side of the ship to the shore. The men gave each of them a basket. As soon as they stood upon the shore, the ship swung round and went away.

"Let us go to that fire," said Asti, "and see what happens to us."

So they went to the rock and sat down by the fire. There was wood near the fire to keep it burning, and near the wood there were warm wraps (pieces of cloth) to protect them from the cold. They opened their baskets and found food in one of them, and in the other there was a harp.

"It is my own harp," said Tua, "the harp which the Prince of Kesh brought to me. I left it in Thebes. How did it come here?"

E. Under the harp there were thousands of pearls on threads of silk.

"Surely," said Tua, "no queen in all the world had

so many beautiful pearls. But what good are they and the harp to us in this forest?"

"No doubt we shall discover in time," said Asti. "Le us thank the gods for their gifts."

Then they ate, and afterwards they lay down by the fire and would have slept, but scarcely had they closed their eyes than the forest seemed to awake. They heard terrible roarings down by the river. They heard the voices of lions and wild cats, and the deep sounds of the great beasts of the river. They saw yellow eyes moving in the darkness, and swift shapes passed across the sand, and stopped and seemed to look at them. There was a crashing among the bushes as a huge beast with a single horn stood there.

"Our end has come," said Tua.

But Asti only threw more wood on the fire, and she said, "Lady, take that harp and play it and sing to it."

And Tua took the harp and sang, and while she sang she forgot everything else. When she stopped she saw that the beasts had gone.

Twenty-four

THE BEGGAR

A. When they awoke they saw that the sun was shining. They went down to the river. The sand was marked with the footprints of the beasts. There they drank and washed themselves. They looked into the mist, expecting to see the ship come back to them, but it did not come. So they

went back to the ashes of their fire. They ate some of the food in Asti's basket.

Then Tua said, "Come, nurse, let us be going. We cannot go up the river or down the river because of the mud, so we must go through the forest, and may the gods lead us!"

Then they put their baskets on their heads, as do the women of Egypt, and the harp hung down Tua's back, and so they marched through the forest hour after hour, finding their path between the big trunks of the trees, and going always towards the south.

They heard big monkeys in the tree tops, and sometimes a beast moving in the bushes. Towards midday the ground began to rise. The trees became smaller and farther apart. At last they reached the edge of a sandy desert.

B. They went on and came to a green place in the desert where there was water. They sat down and drank and afterwards slept. Suddenly Tua heard a voice. She awoke and saw a man standing by her, leaning upon a stick. He was a strange-looking man. He seemed to be of great age, for his hair hung down his shoulders, and his beard reached to his waist. He must once have been very tall, but now he was bent with age.

"From where have you come," said Tua, "and what do you want with us?"

"I have come from the desert," said the old man. "This desert is my home. All my friends and my children are dead, and for three days I have had no food. I smelt your food. Give me some."

"It is yours," said Neter Tua. "What is your name?"

"I am called Kepher."

"Take the food and eat, Kepher," said Neter Tua.

She gave him the basket, and he began to eat hungrily.

"Lady," said Asti, "he will eat it all."

"He is our guest," said Tua. "Let him take what we have to give."

"Then we shall starve."

"If that is so, so let it be, nurse. At least this poor man will be filled."

Once, not long ago, they had starved, and at the thought of the slow pain her eyes filled with tears.

C. Kepher finished all the food and handed back the basket, saying, "Thank you. The Queen of Egypt could not have feasted me more royally. May you never know what it is to lack a meal. Tell me, how did you come here?"

"This is a lady of Egypt," said Asti, "and I am her nurse. Some thieves seized us while we were wandering on the shores of the Nile, and brought us here in their ship. They stopped at that river and we escaped by night. We are escaped slaves."

"Ah!" said Kepher. "I wonder they did not follow you. I thought that you might be other people. As I slept last night, a spirit came to me and said, 'Search for a woman called Asti, and another woman.'"

Then Asti gave a little cry.

"In my long life," said the beggar, "I have often noticed that people are not what they seem. But let us say no more. You and your companion—what is her name?"

"Neferte," said Asti.

"Yes, Neferte. Certainly that is not the name which the spirit used in my dream. I see that when you escaped you brought certain things with you—that harp. And what is in that other basket?"

"Pearls," said Tua.

"Ha! May I see them?"

Tua gave him the basket. He drew out the pearls, feeling them and smelling them and touching them with his tongue.

"It is strange that the thieves did not pursue you, for here you have pearls enough to buy a kingdom."

D. "We cannot eat pearls," said Asti.

"No, but pearls will buy you food."

"Not in the desert," said Asti.

"No. But there is a city in this desert not far away."

"Is it called Napata?"

"No. It is called Tat. It is not far from here, but the path lies through the desert and through tribes of wild men."

"Lead us to the city, Kepher, if you know the way."

"Yes, I know the way," said Kepher, "and I will guide you. Now come."

Hour after hour they walked. At last, at evening, when they were almost tired out, they came to a hill of sand and rock, and from the top of it they saw a large walled town set in a green valley not far below. Kepher led them to some trees on the edge of the fields surrounding the town.

"Now," said he, "drop your veils and stay here. And if anyone comes to you, say that you are poor wandering singers resting. Now give me a small pearl and I will sell it and find you a place to live in."

So Tua gave him a pearl and he went away quickly towards the town. Then Tua lay down at the foot of a tree and slept. When she awoke she saw that the sun had gone down. By her side she saw Kepher with two donkeys.

"Come, friends!" he said. "I have found a lodging for you."

So they got on to the donkeys and were led to the city. At the word of Kepher the gate was opened and they went down the street to a house with a walled garden. They went into the house and found that it was well furnished. A table with food was set ready in it. When they had eaten they went to bed and slept.

Twenty-five

THE CITY OF TAT

A. In the morning Tua and Asti found clean clothes ready for them. They put them on. Then they had their breakfast. Suddenly they looked up and saw that Kepher was in the room with them, though neither of them had heard him or seen him come in.

"You came very silently, my friend," said Asti, looking at him very curiously. "A Ka could not move with less noise. And where is your shadow?"

He looked at the sun outside and then at the floor on which he stood.

"Oh, I forgot my shadow," he said in his deep voice. "A person so poor as I am cannot trouble about a shadow. But look: there it is. But what do you know about Kas? I have heard about a lady in Egypt who by chance had the same name as you, who not only could see a Ka, but had the power of bringing it out. I have heard that the Queen of Egypt has a Ka which can take her place, and

no one knows the difference. And this Ka, which Amen gave to her at her birth, carries out the vengeance of the gods without pity. Tell me, friend Asti, when you were in Egypt did you ever hear people talk about such things?"

He looked at Asti and Asti looked at him. He moved his hands in a strange way, and she bowed her head and was silent.

Tua was very frightened at this strange talk. She did not know what would happen to them if the truth were guessed.

So she said, "Welcome, Kepher, whether you come with or without your shadow. We have much to thank you for because you have found us this fine house and servants and food. Will you not eat again?"

"No," he said, smiling. "I eat very seldom, only once in three days. Life is so short that I cannot waste time in eating."

B. "Tell us, Father Kepher, what are we to do in this town?" said Tua.

"I have told you, Lady. Asti shall sell pearls and other things. And you shall sing, but when you sing you must always sing behind a curtain. For in this city of Tat you must never show your beauty, and least of all to the ruler of the city. Now give me two more pearls. I am going out to buy for you the things which you need. After that, perhaps, you will not see me any more for a long time. But if trouble comes to you, go to the window wherever you are, strike your harp, and call three times, 'Kepher.' No doubt there will be someone listening and he will bring me the news in the desert where I live."

"I thank you, Kepher, and I will remember. But pardon me if I ask you how one so old . . ." she paused.

". . . So old, so ragged, so miserable, can give help? That is what you were going to say, was it not? Well, do not judge from the outside. Good wine is often found in common jars."

"And so," said Tua, "a wanderer who has no shadow can help another wanderer? I understand."

"Well, good-bye," said Kepher. "I am going to buy what you need. Remember what I told you, and do not try to leave the town until the rain has fallen on the mountains, and there is water in the wells. Good-bye, friend Asti. When we meet again we will talk more about doubles. Until that time may the great god of Egypt, Amen, have you in his keeping."

C. He turned and went.

"Who is that man?" said Tua.

"Man?" said Asti. "I have told you he is not a man. He is a god or a ghost."

"Whether he is a man or a ghost, I like him. He has been a good friend to us."

"We shall know whether he has been a good friend to us when he has finished with us," said Asti.

An hour later, when they were still talking of Kepher, men began to come carrying baskets in which there were silks and gold and silver and leather and brasswork. The men set out the goods on the floor. Then there came a man riding a fine white horse. He bowed towards the curtain behind which Tua and Asti were hidden; then he laid a paper on the floor. When he had gone they looked at the paper. It was a paper showing that they were the owners of the house. At the foot of the paper was written, "Received as payment for this house, three pearls and one good meal." Then followed the seal of Kepher, which was a scarab holding the sun between its

front feet. Below it was written, "This is a proud seal for a poor beggar, but it is only my name written in wax."

Asti said, "If the small pearls have such value in the city, what price shall we get for the large ones! Let us go on with our business."

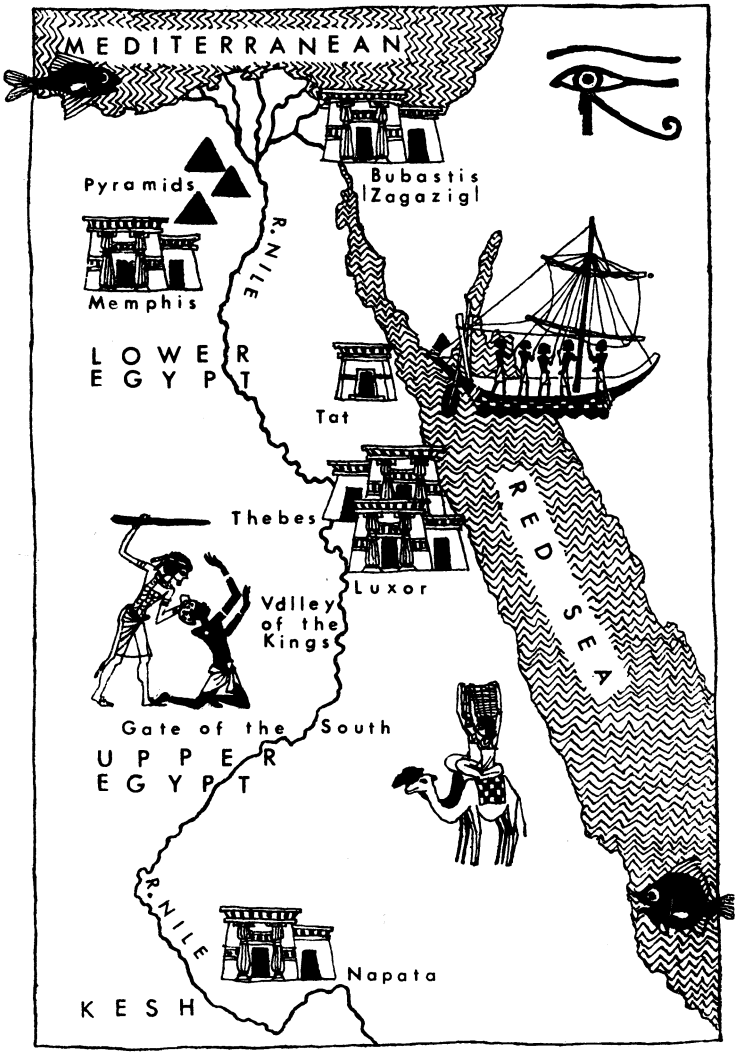
Twenty-six

NETER TUA AND THE KING OF TAT

A. So Tua and Asti became merchants in the city of Tat. For one hour in the morning and one hour in the afternoon Asti, with her face veiled, sat with her goods, selling to all who came. When the second hour was ended, Tua began to sing behind a curtain. Then all stopped and listened. At these times the street in front of the merchants' house was filled with people, for the fame of her singing went through the city. Then Asti left the goods in charge of a servant, and they went and had their meal or wandered in the garden. So the weeks went by, and they became rich, and had such a weight of gold that they hardly knew what to do with it.

It was a peaceful city, for no thieves came, or perhaps it was said that these strangers were under the protection of some god. So they remained there and traded, waiting for the hour of escape, but never daring to leave their own house and garden.

B. The King of Tat was away making war with another king. When Tua and Asti had been in the city for some


MEDITERRANEAN
Pyramids
Memphis
R. NILE
LOWER EGYPT
Bubastis
Zagazig
Tat
Thebes
Luxor
Valley of the Kings
RED SEA
Gate of the South
UPPER EGYPT
R. NILE
Napata
KESH

weeks this king, whose name was Janees, returned from this war, and decided to hold a great feast and ceremony in honour of his victory. Some of his lords had told him about the pearl merchants. He needed some pearls to wear on the great day; so he dressed himself as a common man and went to the house. He arrived late and asked to see the pearls just as Tua, according to her custom, was playing her harp. Then she began to sing. Janees listened to the beautiful voice, and forgot all about the pearls which he had come to buy. When the song was finished Asti stood up and told the servants to shut up the boxes.

"But I want to buy pearls," said Janees.

"You must come back in the evening," said Asti. "Even if you were the King of Tat, I would not sell you pearls out of my hours."

"You speak high words," said Janees angrily.

"High or low, they are what I mean," said Asti.

Janees came back in the evening, more for the desire of hearing that lovely voice again than of buying pearls.

Asti showed him some pearls, but he pushed them aside, saying they were too small. Then she brought out some others which were larger. At last she brought out two of the biggest that she had, perfect pearls, the size of the top of a man's finger.

C. At the sight of these pearls the eyes of Janees became bright. He had never seen such large pearls before. He asked the price. Asti said that it was more than he would care to pay, because there were few such pearls in the whole world. And she named a weight of gold which caused him to step back amazed.

"You are not serious," he said. "Surely you can make the price less?"

"I am serious," she said. "I will not make the price less."

Then he grew angry and said, "Do you know that I am the King of Tat, and if I wish to I can take the pearls without any payment?"

Asti looked at him coolly.

"I should not have thought it," she said. "If you take my goods without any payment, you will be the king of thieves."

Those who heard this laughed, and the King thought it best to join in their laughter. The bargaining went on, but before it was finished Tua began to sing.

"Stop," said the King. "Tomorrow you shall be paid your price. But now I want to listen to that singing, which is above all price."

Janees listened to Tua's singing. Step by step he came nearer to the curtain, but Asti did not notice him because she was busy locking up her goods. At last he reached the curtain. He took hold of it. Then, pretending to feel ill, he fell backwards. The curtain came down, and beyond it he saw Tua singing. In a moment Tua had gone.

D. Janees the King stood up.

"Is this lady your slave?" he said to Asti.

"No. She is my daughter," said Asti, "and it is very wrong of you to spy upon her."

"I wish to make your daughter my Queen, and as a gift you shall have as much gold as I have promised you for your pearls."

"Other kings have wished to marry her, and have offered more, but she is not for you or for any other."

Janees seemed to wish to strike her. Then he seemed to change his mind, for he only said, "That is a rough answer to a fair question. Since no one knows who you

are or where you come from, I will talk with you again tomorrow."

"It is useless," said Asti; but he had already gone.

Soon afterwards Asti found Tua in the garden and told her everything.

"I wish that Kepher was here," said Tua. "It seems to me that I am in trouble. I do not like Janees any better than Abi or the Prince of Kesh."

"I think we had better fly to the desert and look for him," said Asti. "Janees may give us trouble."

Tua agreed. Then she went into the house to ask some question of the servants.

Then she came back and said, "It is useless. There are soldiers all round the house. Some of our women who tried to go out have been turned back. They say that the King has given orders that no one is to leave our doors."

E. "Shall I play my harp and call the name of Kepher, as he told me?"

"Not yet, Lady. This danger may pass. And he would be angry if you called him without reason. Let us go in and eat."

So they went in, and while they were eating they suddenly heard a sound. Looking up, they saw two servants of the King. They were old and had white hair.

"Lady," said one of the servants, "the King has ordered me to take you and your servants and your goods to his own palace, where he wishes to speak to you."

"Since we have no choice," said Asti, "we must go."

So they put on their veils, and the King's servants took them through the silent streets. Great gates closed behind them. They went up many stairs, and came into a room

where they found their own servants already arranging their possessions.

"Now shall I strike my harp and call to Kepher?"

"Not yet, I think," answered Asti. "Let us see how things are before we call for help."

In the centre of the room there was a great stone basin filled with water.

Tua and Asti stood on one side of it and the King came to the other side of it.

He bowed to Tua and said, "Lady, your servants tell me that you are called Neferte, and that you are a lady of Egypt. Since I do not know your real name this name will serve. I come to ask pardon for what must seem to you a great wrong. My excuse is that I could not do anything else. I do not wish to do you any harm. I offer you half my kingdom. I want you to be my Queen."

F. "King Janees," said Tua, "what evil spirit has entered into you that you want to make a singing-girl your Queen? Let me go and keep that high place for one who is worthy of it. Send to Abi, who is now ruler of Egypt, to let you have one of his daughters. Or send to the King of Kesh and ask if he has any daughters. But let this poor singing-girl go her way."

"This poor singing-girl has pearls to sell which are worth nearly all the money in this country, and she has a harp with the crown of Egypt marked on it in gold. And she has such beauty as is found only among the daughters of ancient kings. And on her breast is the holy sign which they worship on the Nile. I thank you for your warning, but I still wish you to be my Queen."

"I am honoured," said Tua coldly, "but it may not be. Among my own humble people there is a man whom I love, and I will marry him or no one."

"Do not let me know that man's name or I shall kill him. I wish to make you my Queen. I give you three days in which to yield. If you do not, you shall be my slave."

Then Tua became angry. "You think me great," she said; "and you are right. For my gods go with me and their strength is great. If you do not let me alone I shall call down their anger upon you."

"You have three days," said the King. "This woman here has heard what I have said."

G. "Yes, King," said Asti, "I have heard. Would you like to know what will be the end of all this? I know some magic, and I will try to show what the end will be."

"Well," said Janees, "if you have a trick, show it."

"I will do so, but you must not blame me if you do not like what you see. Stand where you are and look into the water while I pray to the gods."

Then she turned to Tua and said, "Sing that old and sacred song which I taught you."

Asti knelt down by the pool and stretched out her hands over the water, while Tua began to sing very solemnly. The notes were low and sweet, but it seemed to Janees that they felt like ice and froze his body. He looked down in the water and saw a mist. The mist cleared away and he saw a picture. He saw himself lying naked and dead in his own great hall, ruined by fire, and by him stood his dog, which lifted up his head and seemed to howl. The last word of Tua's song died away and the picture passed. Janees leapt back from the edge of the pool.

"Evil magician!" he cried. "If you were not my guest I would kill you tonight for this trick which you have played upon me."

"I do not know what you saw," said Asti. "Perhaps it was only a fancy. Let us sleep, King, for we are tired. Let the future take care of its own secrets. Leave us."

Janees turned and left them.

"What did he see in the pool, Asti? I saw nothing?"

"I think he saw the shadow of a dead man," answered Asti. "The men who love you seem to be unlucky."

"That is not true," said Tua. "Did I kill the Prince of Kesh? Did I show Janees his shadow in the water? And if he dies he will not die because he loves me, but because he used force on us."

She went to the window and looked down on the courtyard lying quiet in the sunlight. And she struck her harp and called, "Kepher! Kepher! Kepher!"

The echo of her cry came back louder and louder, till it seemed that earth and heaven were filled with the name.

Twenty-seven

THE BEGGAR AND THE KING

A. It was the afternoon of the third day. Tua and Asti were sitting at the window and looking on to the great court, where King Janees was sitting in the shadow and doing justice to his people. The two women were anxious because the time had nearly passed.

"This evening," said Tua, "Janees will come. See how he keeps looking up at this window. Kepher has made

no sign, and Amen sends no answer to my prayers. O Asti, tell me what shall I do?"

"Trust in the gods," said Asti.

"I trust them, Asti; but let us talk about something else. I wonder what has happened in Memphis since I left. Do you think that that terrible Ka of mine is sitting by Abi as her husband? If so, I am sorry for him. I wish I had another Ka to deal with Janees and hold him, while we run away.

"I see Janees is giving judgment, or rather the councillor is giving judgment, for he is whispering in the King's ear all the time. Now he is standing up to come here. Asti, who is coming? Asti, look!"

Through the gateway came a tall man with a white beard, walking with a stick, and looking about blindly, as if the sun was too much for him. The guards came to push him away, but he waved his stick and they fell back as if there was some magic power in the stick. He walked up to the throne, and stopped in front of it, leaning on his stick.

B. "Who is this fellow," asked Janees, "who stands here and does not bow to the King?"

"Are you the King?" asked Kepher. "I am very blind. I thought you were only a common man as I am, but with bright clothes. Tell me, what does it feel like to be a king? Do you still hope and suffer and fear death like a common man? Can you feel grief and disappointment?"

"Do I stay here to answer silly questions, fool?" said Janees angrily. "Turn the fellow out. I have business."

The guards sprang forward to carry out his orders, but Kepher waved his stick and they fell back.

"You have business to do, O King." he said, "but not

business of government. It has to do with someone who is living there."

He pointed towards the rooms from which Tua was watching him.

"But that business is not until sunset, so you still have time to listen to my prayer."

"What do you know of the lady?" cried Janees angrily.

"I am her father, and I have come to tell you that our blood is more ancient than yours, and I will not have you for a son-in-law, nor will she have you for a husband."

Some of the men who heard these words laughed, but Janees did not laugh.

"Take this madman away," he shouted, "and cut out his tongue."

C. Again the guards sprang forward, but before they reached him, Kepher began to speak in a new voice, but in a voice so terrible that they stopped.

"Do not lay a finger on me," he cried, "for you do not know who this is, clothed in rags. Janees, you call yourself King. Now listen to the commands of a greater King, whose throne is above the sun. Before night falls, set that maiden free. Set her, with all her goods, outside the southern gate and leave them there unharmed."

"And if I mock at this King?" said Janees.

"Do not mock," said Kepher. "Think of the trick which you saw in the water."

"That was an Egyptian trick and I see that you helped her. Go away. I laugh at you and your magic tricks. The lady shall be my slave."

"Then listen, Janees, to the fate which shall be yours. Tonight is the night of your death, and many of your people will go with you to the darkness, and tomorrow another King, who is not of your house, shall rule in Tat."

Kepher ceased speaking. He turned and went slowly away, nor did any try to stop him, for there was some strange power which took away their strength.

"Bring that magician back and kill him," shouted Janees.

Then some of the men sprang forward to carry out the King's orders, but they could not find him. A woman had seen him in one place and a child had seen him in another place. Some slaves had seen him and had run away because they noticed that he had no shadow. They tracked him to the southern gate, and there the guard said that a beggar man had gone out of the gate just as they were about to close it and vanished in a sand storm.

D. The sun set and at the time fixed Janees went up to the room where Tua and Asti were living. The lamps were lit in the room. The window was closed. Outside the desert wind was howling, and the air was thick with sand. As once before, Tua and Asti stood waiting for him on the farther side of the stone basin.

Then he said, "The time has come, and I am waiting for your answer."

"O King," said Tua, "listen to me for your own sake, not for mine. I have friends in the earth and in the heavens. One of them visited you today in the courtyard Put away this madness and leave me, for I wish you good, not evil. But if you touch me, death will come to you or to me. If nothing else happens to save me, I shall kill myself."

"Lady," answered Janees in a cold voice, "stop these foolish threats. I am waiting for your answer."

"O King," said Tua, "for the last time I beg you to be wise You think that I am telling lies to save myself, but it is not so. I want to save you."

She pulled back the veil and showed the mark on her breast.

"Look at this mark. Is it wise to do harm to a woman who has this holy seal?"

"I have heard of such a woman," said Janees. "I have heard that she was born in Thebes of a strange father and that she is Queen of Egypt. How did she come here?"

"Perhaps you have heard the truth, O King. Let the daughter of that strange father go."

"But there is another man who claims to be your father: a beggar man. I ask you again," said Janees, "to be my Queen, or must I tell my women to drown that woman-magician in water at your feet and then take you away?"

She made no answer, but Asti cried in a loud voice so that he might hear her above the wind, "Call your women, O King."

Then Janees said, "Come, slaves, and carry out my orders."

E. The door opened and Kepher came in. He was not dressed in rags, but in white. And behind him came wild-looking men with red swords in their hands, men with beards, black faces, and gold chains hung upon their armour. They were the captains of the desert men who knew neither fear nor mercy.

Janees looked and understood. He drew his sword. The men of the desert stood round him and waited, their eyes fixed on Kepher's face.

"Spare him, if you can," said Tua.

"It is too late," said Kepher. "Those who will not listen to the warnings of the gods must suffer the vengeance of the gods. Janees, your palace is on fire, and the

few who stood round you are dead, and tomorrow another King will rule in your place."

Kepher made a sign to Tua and Asti, and they followed him. They went out and saw him no more. They passed the door of the great hall and down the stairs, through the great gates. And as they passed, the dead lay around them.

Twenty-eight

NETER TUA FINDS RAMES

A. Looking behind them, they saw the palace in flames. They reached the square: there were two camels. So they rode through the night, half awake, half sleeping, till morning came.

When morning came Tua and Asti found themselves in a green place in the middle of the desert. Around them was a great army of desert men. In their tent they found their pearls and gold and Tua's harp. In the shadow of some palm trees they saw Kepher, and with him were chiefs of the desert, men who bowed as they advanced.

"Listen, Lady Neferte and Asti," said Kepher. "I must depart. But do not be afraid. These lords of the desert are your servants and will help you on your way. They will bring you to the city of Napata. It is a long journey, but they will guard you safely and bring you to its gates. You may trust them. They will not fail you. But if any trouble comes to you, strike the harp and call my name."

Then Kepher went away from them, walking through

the ranks of the desert men who bowed to him as he passed.

"Who is that man?" asked Asti, as they watched him disappear.

"I cannot tell you, lady," said the leader of the men of the desert, "but from the beginning he has been master of the desert and of all who live in it. At his word the sand storms come and fountains spring up, and tribes grow great or sink into nothingness. We think he is a spirit."

"Thank you," said Asti. "I also think that he is a spirit, so great that I will not name his name."

B. Week after week and month after month the men of the desert marched to the south across the desert. Tua and Asti rode in the middle of them, mounted upon camels. Once hillmen attacked them, but they beat them back. Once there was a great battle with other people of the desert, but those people were defeated. Once they camped for two months in a green place waiting for rain to fall. At last it came, and they went on and on over the endless sand. Then one night they set their camp upon a hill.

At the first sign of daylight Tua and Asti went out. They saw beneath them a great river—the Nile, and the temples and houses of Napata. While they were standing on the hill gazing at the city in the red light of the rising sun, a captain of the desert people appeared, and bowed before them.

"Ladies," he said, "we have fulfilled the command given us by Kepher. Beneath you lies Napata, but we cannot go nearer to its walls because we are at war with the people of the city. Our task is done and the men murmur to be led back to their own place."

"I thank you," answered Tua, "and the gods shall give you your reward. Leave us and go back to your homes, but before you go, take a gift from me."

She gave them nearly all the gold which she and Asti had got by trade in the city of Tat. She kept only the pearls and a little of the gold. Then the captain went away and soon they and their army were hidden in a cloud of dust.

C. Tua and Asti rode down to the banks of the Nile. They joined with others who were travelling towards the city. There was a woman leading three donkeys loaded with vegetables which she wished to sell in the market-place. Asti began to talk to her. She asked Asti where she came from.

"We are from the city of Meroe. We are singers and sellers of pearls."

"You have come to the right place, for there are not many pearls in Napata, and it is said that the young King loves singing."

"What is the name of the young King," asked Asti, "and where is the old King?"

"You cannot have stayed long in Meroe," said the woman suspiciously, "for the old King is dead. The captain whom Pharaoh sent buried him after the great battle. This captain came bringing the body of the Prince of Kesh, whom he had killed because they both loved the Queen of Egypt. This captain was sent to offer himself to the King of Napata for judgment for his crime in killing the Prince. Then the King in his fury ordered that he should be hanged. The captain answered that he was ready to be hanged if the King could hang him. Then there was war between the people of Napata and the Egyptians. But the Egyptians were helped by many

soldiers of the city who hated their master. So the Egyptian became King."

D. "What is the name of the King?" asked Asti.

"See, the gates are opened," said the woman. Pulling her donkeys with her, she was gone.

Tua and Asti rode up a wide street planted with trees until they came to a splendid palace. There they stopped, not knowing where to go, and as they stood there, the gates of the palace opened and a company of horsemen came out.

"Look at the writing on their shields," said Asti.

Tua looked and she saw her own name, and after it the titles, "Queen of the Upper and Lower Land, Lady of Napata."

"It seems that I have subjects here," said Neter Tua, "who have none anywhere else."

Then through the gate rode a man mounted on a splendid horse.

"Who is that?" said Tua.

"My heart tells me that it is Rames, my son."

E. It was indeed Rames, but he had become older and his face was sad.

"Shall we tell him who we are?" said Asti.

"No," said Tua, "not here, not now. He would not believe, and we cannot take off our veils before all these people. Also, I wish to learn more first. Let him pass."

Rames rode on until he came opposite the place where the two women were standing. Then something seemed to draw his gaze to them. He looked once carelessly, and turned his head. He looked a second time, and again turned his head. Then he looked a third time, and his eyes remained fixed upon those two women seated upon

their camels beneath the trees. Then he pulled in his horse and rode up to them.

"Who are you?" he asked. "And where did you get such fine camels?"

Tua bowed her head, but Asti answered, "Sir, we are merchants. One of us plays the harp and sings. We have come here because we understand that pearls are rare in Napata and we have pearls to sell. And we are told that the King of this city loves good singing. My companion learnt music at Thebes. But who are you?"

F. "I am an Egyptian," said Rames. "And I am holding this town for the Queen of Egypt. Perhaps I should say that I hold it for the Pharaoh of Egypt, for my spies tell me that the Star of the Morning has taken Abi, Prince of Memphis, as her husband. They say that the Queen rules the King hardly."

And he laughed bitterly.

"Sir," answered Asti, "it is a long time since we left Thebes, and we know nothing of these things. But if you are the governor of this town, we ask you to show us where to lodge safely, and perhaps this afternoon you will allow us to show you our pearls, and my companion may sing to you."

"I am a soldier," said Rames, "and I would rather buy swords than pearls. I live alone and there is no woman in my house. But because you are of my country I will let you do as you ask. I am going out to drill this company of soldiers. After sunset you may come to my palace and I will see your pearls and hear your songs."

"Officer," he said to a captain, "take these Egyptians to the guest-house, and at sunset bring them to me."

Twenty-nine

NETER TUA SINGS

A. It was sunset. Tua had put on a beautiful white dress with purple edges. She wore a string of pearls round her neck. Over her head was a veil and in her hand was her harp. Asti was dressed in black and had a black veil. Then the captain who brought them to their lodging came to ask them if they were ready to be led before the viceroy.[1]

"Viceroy?" said Asti. "I thought that he was King."

"He is really. But it is his fancy to call himself Viceroy of Neter Tua, wife of Abi. It is a mad fancy, when he might be King himself."

The captain led them through a side gate, and then through many passages and halls. In some of them Tua recognized officers whom she had ordered to accompany Rames. At last they came to a small room where the captain told them to sit down.

A door opened, and through it Rames came in, dressed as an Egyptian soldier. He wore no sign of kingship. Only on his right hand was the royal ring which Tua knew. With him there were several captains with whom he talked about army affairs. Then he bowed to the women and asked them to pardon him for having kept them waiting.

B. "What did you wish to show me, ladies?" said Rames. "Ah, yes, precious stones. I fear you have brought them to a bad market, for I draw only the pay of an officer in the Egyptian army. But if I do not buy myself

[1] Viceroy = ruler for the King.

I may be able to find someone who will wish to buy."

When they saw the young man's noble face and heard his simple words, the hearts of Asti and Tua beat so hard that they could not speak. At last Asti controlled herself.

"Perhaps the great lady your wife will buy, if you do not."

"I have told you already," said Rames angrily, "that I have no wife."

Then Asti drew out a box, and showed some pearls set in the shape of the crown of Egypt. They had made this crown in Tat.

"That is beautiful," said Rames, "but there is only one person who has the right to wear this crown, and that is the Queen of Egypt."

"No, my lord, her husband may wear it also."

"It would not look well on the head of Prince Abi," said Rames.

"Or perhaps," said Asti, "such a crown might be given to a soldier who had conquered a great country if he was of royal blood."

Rames looked at her sharply. "You speak strange words. These pearls are for some richer man than I am. Shut your box and let your companion sing some old song of Egypt."

C. "She shall sing," answered Asti. "But keep the crown as a gift. We made it for you and it may be useful to you. We made it and it is the price which we pay for the liberty of trading in your country. Unless you keep it my daughter shall not sing."

"Let it lie there," answered Rames. "We will talk about it afterwards. Now let me hear the song."

Tua stood up holding her harp underneath her veil.

She began to sing in a low voice a short and gentle song.

"It is pretty," said Rames, when she had finished. "It reminds me of something. Will you sing again?"

Then Tua began to sing again, and this time she sang with all her strength. When the first beautiful notes sounded Rames stood up. He gazed at her. It was the song which she had sung at the feast at Thebes, when Prince Amathel was killed. White-faced and trembling, Rames leant against a pillar. At the end of the song Tua fell back in her chair, and the harp slipped from her hand to the floor.

"Where did that harp come from?" cried Rames. "Surely there are not two such harps in the world. Woman, you have stolen it! But how could you have stolen the music and the voice as well? Forgive me, I pray you, but let me look upon your face."

Then she undid the fastening of her veil, and it fell from her, showing her dressed as a Princess of Egypt.

Their eyes met, and for a time they looked at each other like people in a dream.

D. "What trick is this?" Rames said at last. "Before me stands the Star of the Morning, Queen of Egypt. Her harp was given by the Prince of Kesh who fell that night under my sword. The voice is the Queen's voice, and it is her song. And yet the Star of the Morning is hundreds of miles away with her husband, Prince Abi. You are a magician. Go, or I will order the priests to throw you into the flames."

Then Tua drew back the dress from her breast and showed the Sign of Life.

"When they see this holy mark do you think the priests of Amen will throw me into the flames?" asked Tua.

"If you have power to tell lies in one thing, you have power to do so in all things. She who could steal the beauty of the Queen could steal also the sign of the god."

"Say, Rames, did you steal that ring on your hand or did the Queen give it to you? How did you lose the little finger of that hand? Was it bitten off by a crocodile in the pool of the temple at Thebes?"

Rames said nothing.

"Nurse," said Tua, "I cannot persuade him that I am the Queen of Egypt. Will you try to persuade him?"

Asti loosened the black veil and it fell down at her feet. Rames gave a cry.

"My mother! They told me that you were dead in Memphis."

"Yes," said Asti. "I am your mother, and this is the Queen who for two years has met bravely all the dangers of the desert because she loves you. Now do you believe?"

Thirty

ASTI GIVES ORDERS TO THE KA

A. It was night. Asti and Tua had told their story.

"Such is our story," said Asti. "Now tell us yours."

"It is short," said Rames. "I obeyed the Queen's orders and travelled up the Nile to this city. The old King, father of the Prince of Kesh, meant to kill me. But I attacked him first and he was killed. No one was sorry because he was a bad king. I stepped into his place, and ever since I have been busy setting things right in the

kingdom. I would have gone back to Egypt, but my spies told me of the murder of Pharaoh, and that the Star of the Morning had married Prince Abi so that she might save her life and her power."

"Did you believe them?" said Tua.

"What else could I do?" said Rames. "The spies said that they had seen you. How could I know that it was your Ka."

"What shall we do now?" said Tua.

"Will you not first marry me?" suggested Rames. "After that we can think."

"I will marry you in one place only—in the temple of Amen at Thebes. First win me my throne. Then ask for my hand."

"It shall be done," said Rames.

B. It was midnight. Asti and Tua knelt side by side and prayed to Amen, father of the gods. When their prayer was ended they rose to their feet. Then once again as in the tower of Memphis, Asti spoke the terrible words which had been taught her by Ahura.

There was a sound as of beating wings. In the shadow behind the lamp a mist gathered and took shape. It was the Ka of Neter Tua. In silence it stood before them, looking at them with its shining eyes.

"How is Prince Abi, and how are things going on in Egypt?" asked Asti.

"Abi is wasting away, and knows no happy hour, and in Egypt all is going well. Never was Egypt greater than she is now, for in all things I have carried out your orders. And now let me rest, for I am weary."

"Not yet, O Ka, for there is still work for you to do. Go back to Thebes. Tell Abi and his councillors that Rames has seized the throne of Kesh and has declared

himself King of Egypt and your husband. Say that Rames says that he is your husband because Pharaoh, your father, promised it. Make Abi gather a great army and march southwards to make an end of Rames, but secretly whisper in the ears of the leaders of the army that it is true that Pharaoh promised you to Rames, that it is true that the god Amen is angry with Abi because of his crime. Tell the leaders of the army to rise up against Abi. At the Gateway of the South, where the Nile flows through great walls of rock, Rames will meet the army of Abi. I shall be there, and perhaps another who is greater. There, at the Gateway of the South, your work will be ended and you shall have rest."

"I hear your commands," said the Ka.

Thirty-one

THE TWO DREAMS

A. It was morning at Thebes. Abi sat in the great hall of the palace of Thebes, doing the business of government. Beside him sat Kaku. Both were very changed: Abi was worn with work and fear and unhappiness, and Kaku had become an old man who trembled as he walked.

"Is the business finished, officer?" asked Abi.

"No," answered Kaku. "There is still enough to keep you busy here till noon. And after that you must meet the Council."

"I will not meet them. Let them wait. I will not be

worked to death. I have not known an hour's rest or peace since I became Pharaoh."

"Lord," answered Kaku, "you must meet the Council. The Queen has ordered it."

"The Queen!" answered Abi. "I hope I am never to meet the Queen again. She is not a woman, but a devil with a heart of ice. Last night, as I sat listening to her orders, suddenly she vanished. Then she came back again. I asked her where she had been. She said she had been farther than I could travel in a year to see one whom she loved. Now, who could that be?"

"I think it was Rames," answered Kaku. "But we are in her power. We must do what she orders."

"There you speak truly," said Abi. "Let us go on with the Queen's business. Call the writers."

Kaku turned to obey. Then suddenly there was a cry:

"The Queen is waiting with a great company, and wishes to speak to her good lord, the Pharaoh of Upper and Lower Egypt."

B. Abi and Kaku looked at each other, and despair was in their eyes.

"Let her majesty enter," said the King.

Then through the great doors came the Queen, splendid in her proud beauty. Merytra was with her, for it was the Queen's orders that this woman should wait upon her day and night without pause; so she was worn almost to nothing with fear and labour. Behind her came guards and high priests, and after them the lords of the Council and leaders of the army. The Queen went on up the hall till she reached the foot of the throne where Abi was sitting.

Then she said, "I come as a loyal wife to make a humble prayer to Pharaoh. My lord, last night I dreamed

a dream. I dreamed that Rames, now King of Kesh, has made a plan to make war on Egypt, to kill you and proclaim himself Pharaoh, and to take me to be his wife."

"No doubt," said Abi, "Rames might think of such things; but he is now at Napata, which is far away, and has probably only a small army."

"Oh Pharaoh, that was not all my dream. I saw two pictures. In the first Rames was taking Thebes and killing you and taking me away as his wife. And the second picture showed you and your army meeting him at the Gate of the South and killing him, and seizing the kingdom of Kesh, and ruling it for Egypt."

C. "Tell me, which of these dreams would you follow, O Queen, for they cannot both be right?"

"How can I know, Pharaoh?" said the Queen. "But there is Kaku. He is a magician. He may make the matter clear."

"The thing is too difficult for me," said Kaku.

But he felt the glittering eyes of the Queen fixed upon him, compelling him to speak as she wished.

"I think that the second dream is the true one," he said. "You must go up to the Gate of the South with your army."

"For two years," said Abi, "I have ruled in Egypt, and I have had three wars: a war against the people of Syria, a war against the people of the desert, and a war against the people of the lowlands. Must I now in my old age have another war against the people of Kesh? Let Rames come if he wishes, and I will hang him here at the gates of Thebes."

"No, Pharaoh," said Kaku, "you must hang him in the desert hundreds of miles from Thebes. That is the command of the gods."

"The gods have spoken," said the Queen. "Now, Pharaoh, let us make ready to travel to the Gate of the South, and there hang Rames so that Egypt may be free from danger, and that the wealth of Kesh may be divided amongst us."

That night Abi and Kaku stood face to face.

"What is this that you have done?" said Abi. "Do you not remember the words which the dead Pharaoh spoke in my dream? He said that I should be King until I met Rames and a beggar man who has a message for me."

"I remember," said Kaku.

"What is this message? Is it the message of my death and yours?—Our tombs were finished yesterday."

"It may be so, Lord," said Kaku.

"Then why did you give that meaning to the Queen's dream?"

"Because I could not help it," said Kaku. "The Queen compelled me. Abi, there is no escape for us. We are in the net of Fate."

Thirty-two

AT THE GATE OF THE SOUTH

A. Three months had gone by. The camp of the great army of Pharaoh was at the Gate of the South and the warships of Pharaoh lay along the banks of the Nile. There they lay prepared for battle, for spies had reported to them that Rames was advancing swiftly northward,

but that his army was so small that it could easily be destroyed.

One evening as the sun sank, news came that the army of Rames had appeared and was among the mountains on the right bank of the Nile.

"Good!" said the Queen. "Tomorrow Pharaoh will go up against him and make an end of the matter. Is that not so, Pharaoh?"

"Yes, yes," said Abi. "The sooner the better, for I am worn out and wish to go back to Thebes. I have my doubts of this war. I do not know why. What are you gazing at in the sky, Kaku?"

The eyes of the councillors were turned to Kaku. They saw that he was much disturbed.

"Look!" he said, pointing towards the skies.

They looked, and saw hanging just above the red light of the sunset a very bright and wonderful star, and near to it another pale star which it seemed to cover.

B. "It is the star of Amen," said Kaku, "and your star, and it will never be seen again by living men. I foretold this many years ago. Your day is done. Your night is at hand, O Abi."

"If that is so," said Abi in his rage and terror, "you shall share it."

As he spoke loud cries were heard, and Merytra ran in crying, "The vengeance of the gods! This evening, as I slept, the spirit of the dead Pharaoh came and said, 'Tell the murderer Abi and the magician Kaku that I call both of them to meet me, and you, woman, must come with them.'"

Now Abi was mad with fear.

"They are magicians trying to do magic upon me," he said. "Take them and keep them safe. Let them be

beaten. Tomorrow I will hang them when I have killed Rames."

"Tomorrow they will be hanged when you have killed Rames. I will see that it is done," said the Queen, and she laughed.

C. Merytra lay upon her bed. A woman came in and sat near her. She looked up and saw that it was the Queen.

"Listen to me," said the Queen, "and tell my words to Abi. My time is finished, and I leave him. If he wishes to see Neter Tua again, let him look for her in the camp of Rames. He will find her in the temple of Amen on the mountains in the middle of the camp."

Then she was gone. Merytra rose from her bed and called the guards to lead her to Abi. She called so loud that Prince Abi came to her.

"What is it now, woman? Have you dreamed some more dreams?"

"No, Prince Abi; but the Queen has fled to Rames."

"It is a lie," said Abi. "How could she have fled through so many guards?"

"Search then, and see, O Abi."

So Abi searched, but the Queen could not be found. At midnight, while they were still searching for the Queen, they saw a tall figure dressed in rags with a stick in his hand.

"Who are you?" asked Abi.

"Listen, councillors and captains of Egypt, to the command of Amen, spoken by his messenger Kepher, the wanderer. Do not lift your swords against Rames, for he is my servant and the husband of the Queen. Seize Abi, the murderer of Pharaoh, and Kaku the magician, and lead them at sunrise to my temple, and there I will declare my commands to you."

D. Abi drew his sword and rushed at the man, but before he reached him Kepher was gone and they heard him repeating the message in another place. They rushed to the place, and now he was repeating his message on the ships; first on this ship and then on that.

"It is the gods who speak," cried the priests. "Let us obey the gods."

They threw themselves upon Abi and bound him and they bound Kaku and Merytra also, and waited for the sunrise.

Thirty-three

THE JUDGMENT OF THE GODS

A. At the same hour Tua was sleeping in the temple on the hill and Asti was watching her. Then she saw a shape which she knew well.

"What do you want, Ka?" asked Asti.

"I want to rest," answered the Ka. "My task is finished and I am weary. Speak the secret words of power and let me return to her from whom I came."

Then Asti said the secret words, and as she spoke them the Ka seemed to grow faint and fade away. Tua sat up in her bed, stretched her arms, and then slept heavily till the morning.

When Tua awoke she asked what had happened. "I feel changed," she said.

"Your Ka has come back to you," said Asti. "Rise up, for this is the day of your victory and of your marriage."

At the gates of the temple Tua found Rames waiting for her. They heard a sound as of an army marching.

"What is happening?" asked Tua.

"I think that Abi is attacking us." he said.

B. Then two of Rames' captains ran in and reported that messengers had come in peace from the army of Abi.

"Call the officers," said Rames, "but be careful, for this may be some trick."

"Come, Queen, for it is you that should speak to them, for I am only the leader of your army."

Then they went into the inner court, and the Queen sat down.

Messengers from the army of Abi entered. Rames noticed that amongst them were the greatest captains and most holy priests of Egypt.

Then the high priest of Amen at Thebes rose and said, "After you left our camp last night, a messenger came to us from the father of the gods."

"Stop, high priest!" said Tua. "I did not leave your camp: I have never been in it. For two years I have never been in Egypt, not since I left Memphis to save myself from death or marriage with Abi."

C. The high priest turned and looked at the men standing behind him.

"Pardon, but how can this be?" he said. "For two years we have seen you living amongst us as the wife of Abi."

Tua looked at Asti and Asti looked at the high priest.

"You know me?"

"Yes, lady. We know you. You are the wife of Mermes and the mother of Rames. We know that you are one of the greatest magicians in Egypt, but we believed that you

were killed in the Temple of Sekhet at Memphis. Now we understand that you only vanished."

"What have you here?" asked Asti.

"Bring out the prisoners," said the high priest.

Then the soldiers brought forward the prisoners, Abi, Kaku and Merytra, and made them stand before the Queen.

"These are the murderers of my father," said Neter Tua. "Why are my eyes ashamed by the sight of them?"

"Because the messenger of the gods, dressed as a beggar man ordered it," answered the high priest. "We understand that they are to be brought here to be judged for the murder of Pharaoh."

"Shall a wife sit in judgment on her husband?" said Abi.

"I was never your wife," said Neter Tua. "I have not seen you since the death of Pharaoh. You were the husband of my Ka, and last night my Ka returned to me. Tell them, Asti, the story."

Then Asti stood forward and told them this story. And when it was done there was a great silence.

D. Then the high priest cried, "O Amen, father of this Queen, show us your will."

There was silence. Then in the dark temple a sound was heard, the sound of a stick tapping at the stone floor, and from the inner part of the temple there came out an old beggar.

"I am Kepher," he said, "the wanderer in the desert. I am the voice of Amen, chief of the gods. Pharaoh, servant of the gods, was murdered, and Rames was sent forth to danger far from her whom he loved. Now this is the command of the gods. Let Rames and Neter Tua

be married and rule over Egypt and bring peace and gentleness to it. And let these"—he pointed to Abi, Kaku and Merytra—"be put in the Temple of Amen to wait what the god sends to them."

Then Kepher went away, and no one saw him again.

Then they put Abi, Kaku and Merytra in the inner part of the temple before the stone feet of the god and shut the doors on them.

The high priest joined the hands of Rames and Neter Tua and made them man and wife. They drove through the army of Egypt, and then went northwards to Thebes. At the marriage feast Tua played her harp and sang the ancient song.

In the morning Asti opened the doors of the temple and looked in; and there, at the feet of the god, lay Abi, Kaku and Merytra, each dead by their own hands. And the stone eyes of the god gazed down upon them.

QUESTIONS

1. A. 1. Who was the governor of Memphis?
2. Where did the ship arrive?
3. Where did Prince Abi strike the slave woman?

B. 1. Who is Merytra?
2. Who is Kaku?
3. What does not Abi like to hear?

C. 1. What is the question?
2. What fell off Kaku's head?
3. What does Kaku call Abi?
4. What does Abi hope to become?

D. 1. At what time did Abi wish to reach the city?
2. What held him back?
3. Where does Abi wish to be buried?
4. What star is working against Abi?

E. 1. What star is joined with the star of Amen?
2. In how many years' time will the other stars overpower Abi's star?
3. Where will they overpower Abi's star?

F. 1. Abi said, "This is the star of Abi."—What?
2. What will Abi give to Kaku?
3. Who came riding along the bank?

2. A. 1. What does Pharaoh say that he will do?
2. What does not Pharaoh want?
3. Whom will Pharaoh not allow inside the city?

B. 1. By whom was Pharaoh loved?
2. What is Abi thinking of doing?
3. What will Kaku be if Abi succeeds?

C. 1. Who will fight against Abi?
2. When will Pharaoh receive Abi?
3. What must the captain and Kaku swear?
4. For what other thing does Kaku ask?

3. A. 1. Whom were the soldiers bringing?
2. Through what did the two boats move?
3. What was the name of Pharaoh's Queen?
4. How old was Pharaoh?

B. 1. Where did Abi kneel?
2. Whom did Abi attack?
3. Who are waiting outside?

C. 1. What does Abi not see?
2. What does Abi know well?
3. What may yet happen?

D. 1. What does Abi ask Pharaoh to do?
2. What did Ahura throw on the floor?
3. What has Abi not told Phaiaoh?

E. 1. At whom did Abi look?
2. Who had told Pharaoh?
3. What must Abi swear?

4. A. 1. What statue was there in the temple?
2. Who knelt at the foot of the god?
3. For what were they praying?
4. Whom did they find at the door of the temple?

B. 1. What will come to the Queen in her sleep?
2. Who was holding Pharaoh's arm?
3. What did the spirit tell the Queen would be given to her?
4. What will be on the child's breast?

C. 1. What did the King see just below the Queen's throat?
2. Who was brought before Pharaoh?
3. What will be the name of the daughter?
4. What will Abi remember?

5. A. 1. How big was the mark on the breast of the child?
2. Why were some people secretly sad?
3. What words were to be written after the name of Queen Ahura?
4. On what day did Ahura order the baby to be brought to her?

B. 1. What is a Ka?
2. What did Ahura tell the baby's Ka to do?
3. Whom did the Queen hear calling?

C. 1. Where was the baby taken when it was six months old?
2. What was the name of the captain of the guard?
3. What was the name of his wife?
4. What had Mermes' family been?
5. What did Mermes say when he refused high rank?

6. A. 1. Who was born on the same day as Neter Tua?
2. What did the mother say about the child's head?
3. What was the name of the child?
4. Why did the Council tell Pharaoh to kill the child?
5. What will the child be to Pharaoh's daughter?
6. Who became nurse to Pharaoh's daughter?

B. 1. Why was the Princess master of Rames?
2. What did Neter Tua sometimes have?
3. What did Neter Tua look at?
4. How old was Rames when he went to school?

7. A. 1. What did Rames say when he came back from school?
2. Who was Neter Tua's companion?
3. What lived in the pool?
4. What fell down on the sand?

B. 1. What did the boy bring?
2. Who warned Neter Tua?
3. What had Rames given for the pigeon?

C. 1. What made Tua feel ill?
2. What was there near the side?
3. Where may the crocodile be hiding?

D. 1. What did Rames throw into the water?
2. What did the crocodile begin to do?
3. With what did Rames strike the crocodile?
4. What did Rames do next?

E. 1. What part of Rames did the crocodile seize?
2. Where did Rames strike the crocodile?
3. What was torn off?

F. 1. Where was Neter Tua when she recovered?
2. For whom was Asti weeping?
3. Where is Rames?
4. What will be done to Rames?

G. 1. For whom did Pharaoh send?
2. What did Pharaoh give to Rames?
3. What title did he give to Rames?
4. For whom did Neter Tua pray beside her father and mother?

8. A. 1. What must Tua share?
2. For whom did Tua look?
3. Whom did Tua call?
4. How old was Asti?

B. 1. What does Neter Tua tell Asti to call her?
2. About what were the councillors talking?
3. What law was made long ago?

C. 1. In what three ways may Rames be killed?
2. What does Tua command Asti to do?
3. Who is said to be Tua's father?

D. 1. To what did they come?
2. What is this place?
3. What were there on each side?
4. What was there at the end?

E. 1. Where did Asti lead Tua?
2. What seemed to arise from the graves?
3. How many Kas were there?
4. Who was the figure?

F. 1. Of what thing does Tua want to be sure?
2. Will Tua love in vain?
3. Who can call forth Tua's Ka?
4. What must Ahura do before she goes?

9. A. 1. Who were the guests of honour at the feasts?
2. Who was the one person left?
3. Where did the father of this person live?
4. What will Prince Amathel become?

B. 1. What did the councillors hope?
2. Who was present at the crowning of the Queen?
3. What were the Kings of Kesh once?
4. Who are left of those Kings of Egypt?
5. Why is not Mermes King of Kesh?

C. 1. Who came after the players?
2. What were there round the Prince's neck?
3. Who was the captain of the guard?

D. 1. Did Tua make a speech?
2. What did Tua see over the top of her fan?
3. What did the Prince offer the Queen beside jewels?

E. 1. What did Tua tell Asti to leave?
2. What did Amathel keep telling Rames to do?
3. What did Tua give to the slaves as payment?
4. What does Tua wish to know?

10. A. 1. What is it not right for a Queen of Egypt to do?
2. What was the song about?
3. What was in Rames' hand?
4. What happened to Prince Amathel's head?

B. 1. Where did Amathel strike Rames?
2. Why did not Pharaoh speak?
3. What did Rames' sword cut off?
4. Where was Rames wounded?

C. 1. By what was Rames' blow stopped?
2. How did Rames' sword pierce Amathel?
3. What had not the Nubians?
4. Who led the Egyptians?
5. How many Nubians were left standing?

D. 1. What did Rames ask Pharaoh to do?
2. For what did Tua bless Rames?
3. What did this mean for Egypt?

E. 1. What did Neter Tua call?
2. What do the councillors wish Tua to do?
3. What is the first thing which Tua might do?
4. What is the second thing which she might do?

F. 1. How many soldiers will go to Kesh?
2. Who will go in command of them?
3. Why did some seem surprised?
4. On whose shoulders did Tua lean?

11. A. 1. To whom does Neter Tua drink?
2. Whom will Tua visit?
3. Whom does Tua call?

B. 1. What would Mermes have felt if Pharaoh had died?
2. Whom does Tua tell Mermes to bring?
3. To whom did Tua write letters?

C. 1. What has Tua to give to Rames?
2. What does Tua wish?
3. Do the people of Kesh like their Nubian kings?
4. What would Rames be if the house of Amathel passed away?
5. What would Rames be if Neter Tua and her family passed away?

D. 1. Until when must not Rames return?
2. What secret does Rames tell Neter Tua?
3. Rames may ask for the hand of the Queen in marriage—when?

12. A. 1. Who visited Rames before he sailed?
2. Whom will Rames not see again?
3. What must Rames be as well as great?

B. 1. What was in the packet?
2. Who wore the ring in past years?
3. What has the Queen?

C. 1. What order did the people think had been given to the soldiers about Rames?
2. How long was it since a queen had ruled in Egypt?
3. How long did Pharaoh lie helpless?
4. For whom did Pharaoh send?

D. 1. What was the last thing which Pharaoh remembered?
2. How many soldiers would Pharaoh have sent?
3. For whom did Pharaoh send?

E. 1. Why would it have been impossible to kill Rames?
2. What did Pharaoh begin to do when he was strong again?

13. A. 1. Where will Pharaoh journey?
2. Where was the pilgrimage afterwards written?
3. Where did Tua wish to go?
4. Where did they go?

B. 1. Where was Tua crowned again?
2. Where did Tua ride with Asti?
3. Where did they go next?
4. Who received them?
5. Why was this man not at the crowning of Neter Tua?
6. Why were Pharaoh and his councillors surprised?

C. 1. What did Pharaoh see in the streets?
2. How many men had Pharaoh with him?
3. What might a stranger think about Abi?
4. When does Tua say they can go away?

D. 1. How old was Abi?
2. Where did Tua expect to meet Abi?
3. Where was a palace prepared for Pharaoh?

E. 1. What had the smaller palace once been?
2. Of what was the temple part?
3. Where were the Queen and Asti's rooms?

14. A. 1. Where did Abi sit?
2. Where should he be sitting?
3. Who was standing behind Abi?

B. 1. What is the name of the astrologer?
2. Who was among the ladies of the court?
3. At whom did this woman often look?

C. 1. Who brought the mummy into the room?
2. Is the mummy a king?
3. In what way is Memphis unlike Thebes?

D. 1. What did Prince Abi raise?
2. What does Abi hope that Neter Tua will do before she departs?
3. When Neter Tua seeks a husband where will she not find one?

E. 1. What does Abi mean?
2. For how many days is a ceremony planned?
3. In how many days can help reach them?

F. 1. Who also warned Pharaoh?
2. Whose advice does Pharaoh take?
3. Whose help will Neter Tua call?

15. A. 1. Where did Merytra hide?
2. What instruments were in the room?
3. What was the crystal used for?
4. What does Abi not know?

B. 1. What will Merytra get?
2. As what will Merytra get honour and power?
3. What did Kaku bring out from a hidden place?

C. 1. By whom was the book written?
2. What threatened Kaku when he took the book?
3. What light was in the crystal ball?
4. Whom did Merytra see in the crystal ball? (Two persons.)

D. 1. Who means to be King of Egypt?
2. How may he become King of Egypt?
3. What are not queens supposed to do?

E. 1. What must Pharaoh be made to do?
2. What was in the box?
3. Where must the figure be put?
4. What will happen to Pharaoh during the night?
5. What will happen to Merytra if she does not obey?

16. A. 1. Who was in the Queen's dreams?
2. Who came across the courtyard at midnight?
3. Who came with her?
4. Why did not Asti's messenger go to Thebes?

B. 1. With whom is Pharaoh?
2. What did they put in the hole in the stone?
3. Where did they stop on the way back?
4. What did Abi want?

C. 1. What did Abi ask Pharaoh to give him?
2. What really moves Abi?
3. What did Tua say to Abi when she stopped him the second time?
4. What did Tua ask the councillor?

D. 1. Who are restless?
2. What did many question?
3. What did Pharaoh order Mermes to do to Abi?
4. When will Pharaoh leave for Thebes?

E. 1. How did Mermes call the guards?
2. Where will Abi go tomorrow?
3. What did the guards do to Kaku?
4. What did Mermes and Asti pray Pharaoh to do?

F. 1. Why may the people open the gates tonight?
2. What ghost came to Asti in the night?
3. Who is the enemy? For what reason does Pharaoh say Asti speaks against Merytra?

17. A. 1. Who was in all Tua's visions?
2. What was Asti saying?
3. What does Neter Tua wish?

B. 1. What has happened to Pharaoh?
2. To what did Pharaoh point?
3. What were Pharaoh's legs like?
4. Who saw Pharaoh last?
5. Who has escaped?

C. 1. How was Prince Abi dressed?
2. What did Asti find in Merytra's room?
3. What had happened to the legs of the image?
4. What did Pharaoh say?

18. A. 1. What did one of Tua's officers suggest?
2. Why could not this suggestion be done?
3. At what time will they march?
4. What did the criers proclaim?

B. 1. Who carried the body of Pharaoh?
2. Who came behind the priests?
3. What appeared?
4. Who were the four men?

C. 1. What killed the sons of Abi?
2. How many men tried to hold the gate?
3. How many men were with the Queen's party when they were driven through the halls?
4. What did Mermes shout as he went to his death?

D. 1. To where did Tua walk?
2. What did the people in the streets say?
3. What will Tua do if the soldiers try to seize her?
4. What will Tua do if she does not marry Abi?

19. A. 1. How many days had passed?
2. What had Tua eaten?
3. What did the people know?
4. What may be used now?

B. 1. What was broken when Asti said the magic words?
2. What did Tua see at the foot of her bed?
3. What does Tua want?

C. 1. What does Tua wish?
2. What does the Ka say about Tua's third wish?
3. What will Abi soon do?
4. What will the Ka do?

D. 1. To what must Asti and Tua trust?
2. What did they hear?
3. What shall never be said?

20. A. 1. Where was Merytra sitting?
2. What will the Queen and Asti do to Merytra?
3. What letter did Kaku receive?
4. Whose wife is Merytra now?

B. 1. What does Merytra wish to know?
2. What did Merytra see in the crystal?
3. Where did one of the pieces of crystal strike Merytra?

C. 1. Who appeared?
2. What weight did Abi feel?
3. What did Pharaoh tell Abi to do?
4. Until when will Abi rule?

D. 1. What does the dream mean?
2. What may Abi do to Rames?
3. In what way did Pharaoh speak of the Queen?

E. 1. What are the people beginning to do?
2. What will have reached Thebes by now?
3. What did the officers do?

F. 1. Who went to look for the Queen?
2. Where had Pharaoh set his throne?
3. Where was Neter Tua sitting?

G. 1. Where has the Queen spies?
2. Where is Asti?
3. How has Abi earned his place on the throne?

21. A. 1. What did the men say?
2. What did the women say?
3. Where will the marriage be?
4. Where will the Prince show himself to the people?

B. 1. Which throne was for the Queen?
2. What must the Prince show from the first?
3. How could people see that the Prince was not at ease?
4. What sort of dress was the Queen wearing?

C. 1. Where did the Queen sit?
2. What did Prince Abi say?
3. What did the Queen tell Abi to do?
4. What did the people shout to Abi to do?
5. What did those people who were loyal to Pharaoh do?

D. 1. There were many of what people in the hall?
2. What did the Prince order his guards to do?
3. What did a mocking voice shout?
4. Where did the mocker go and stand?

E. 1. The people will not take Neter Tua for Queen so long as . . . —what?
2. To whom did Tua pray?
3. What did the clouds look like?
4. What did one cloud look like?

F. 1. To what did Kaku point?
2. What did Tua say?
3. What had fallen?
4. Where was the head of the man who mocked thrown?
5. What was the Queen doing?
6. Where was Abi?

G. 1. What did the Queen tell the priests to see?
2. What did Abi do?
3. Whom would the Queen not allow to touch her?
4. What will the Queen tell Kaku?

22. A. 1. At what was Kaku working?
2. What had Abi not been accustomed to do?
3. From where must the difference in the accounts be met?
4. Whom did Kaku meet in his office?

B. 1. Why did not Kaku recognize Abi?
2. What does Abi do from morning to night?
3. Whom must Abi punish?
4. Why is the Queen going to Thebes?
5. What grave is next to Abi's?

C. 1. What is Abi's plan?
2. What would be Kaku's reward?
3. What is the truth about the Queen?
4. Who is coming?

D. 1. Why is Abi's sword drawn?
2. What happened when Abi rushed at the Queen?
3. What did Abi ask? "Are you . . . (*a*), or are you . . . (*b*)?"
4. Where is Neter Tua?

23. A. 1. What did Neter Tua hear?
2. In what was she?
3. Who was by her side?

B. 1. With what was the ship covered?
2. In what were the rowers dressed?
3. What was in front of them when they awoke again?
4. Where were they sailing when they woke again?

C. 1. Where does the canal lead?
2. What had been built over them when they awoke?
3. Where was the ship going when they woke up?
4. How many days was it before the movement of the ship became less?
5. What had they entered?
6. Where did they stop?

D. 1. Who appeared when Tua and Asti had finished eating?
2. What did Tua see on a rock?
3. What did the men give them?
4. What was there near the wood?
5. What was in one of the baskets?
6. What was in the other?

E. 1. What was under the harp?
2. What voices did they hear?
3. What beast made a crashing in the bushes?

24. A. 1. With what was the sand marked?
2. What did they expect to see?
3. Where must they go?
4. In what direction did they always go?
5. What did they reach at last?

B. 1. How long was the man's beard?
2. Where is the man's home?
3. For how many days has the man had no food?
4. What is the name of the man?
5. At what thought did Tua's eyes fill with tears?

C. 1. For whom did the spirit tell Kepher to search?
2. What does Asti say is the name of her companion?
3. How did he examine the pearls?

D. 1. What is the name of the city?
2. To what did they come at evening?
3. To what did Kepher lead them?
4. What did Kepher tell them to give him?
5. To what did they go?

25. A. 1. What did Tua and Asti find?
2. What did Kepher forget?
3. How often does Kepher eat?

B. 1. Where must Tua sing?
2. Where must Tua strike her harp if there is trouble?
3. When may they leave the town?

C. 1. What were the men carrying?
2. What was the man riding?
3. What did the paper show?
4. What was the seal of Kepher?

26. A. 1. How long did Asti sit with her goods?
2. What did Tua do when the second hour was ended?
3. How much gold had they?

B. 1. What did Janees decide to hold?
2. When did Janees arrive at the house?
3. When did Janees come back?
4. How big were the two largest pearls?

C. 1. What price did Asti name for the pearls?
2. What will Janees be if he takes the goods without payment?
3. What did Janees pretend to do?

D. 1. What does Asti say that Tua is?
2. What does Tua wish?
3. What are there all round the house?

E. 1. What has the King ordered his servants to do?
2. What was there in the centre of the room?
3. What does the King want Tua to be?

F. 1. What does Tua say has entered Janees?
2. What is marked on the harp?
3. How many days does the King give Tua?

G. 1. Whom did Janees see in the water?
2. If Janees dies, why will it be?
3. What did Tua do?

27. A. 1. What time was it?
2. Where was Janees sitting?
3. What must Tua do?
4. Who came through the gate?

B. 1. What did Kepher think Janees was?
2. What relation does Kepher say he is to Tua?
3. What does Janees order his men to do to Kepher?

C. 1. When will Janees die?
2. Out of which gate did Kepher go?

D. 1. What sound was heard outside the window?
2. What will Tua do if nothing happens to save her?
3. What did Tua show to Janees?
4. What does Janees threaten to do to Asti?

E. 1. Who came in?
2. How was he dressed?
3. Who were the men who came behind him?
4. What two things were there in the square?

28. A. 1. Where did they find themselves in the morning?
2. Who was in the shadow of the trees?
3. To what place will the lords of the desert bring Tua?
4. Who does Asti think that Kepher is?

B. 1. For how long did they camp in a green place?
2. Why cannot the desert men go near the city?
3. What gift did Tua give to the desert men?

C. 1. What was the woman leading?
2. From what city did Asti say that she had come?
3. What did the King order to be done to Rames?
4. By whom were the Egyptians helped?

D. 1. To what did Tua and Asti come?
2. What was written on the shields?
3. What was the name of the man mounted on the splendid horse?

E. 1. How many times did Rames look at Tua and Asti?
2. What question did he ask them?
3. What has Asti been told about the king of this city?

F. 1. What does Rames say that he is doing?
2. What have spies told Rames about Tua?
3. What does Asti ask Rames to show her?
4. When does Rames say Tua and Asti can go to his palace?

29. A. 1. What colour was Tua's dress?
2. What title did the captain give Rames?
3. Whom did Tua recognize?
4. What had Rames on his right hand?

B. 1. What has Rames told Asti already?
2. In what shape were the pearls set?
3. To whom might such a crown be given?

C. 1. Where did Tua hold her harp?
2. Where had Tua sung the song before?
3. What does Rames wish to do?
4. How was Tua dressed?

D. 1. What will Rames order the priests to do?
2. What did Tua show?
3. Tua asked Rames if he stole . . . —what?
4. What does Tua ask Asti to do?

30. A. 1. Why did not Rames go back to Egypt?
2. What does Rames ask Tua to do?
3. Where will Tua marry Rames?

B. 1. What were Asti and Tua doing?
2. What words did Asti speak?
3. What came?
4. What must the Ka make Abi do?
5. What must the Ka tell the leaders of the army to do?

31. A. 1. What had Kaku become?
2. What has not Abi known since he became Pharaoh?
3. What did the Queen do suddenly while Abi was listening to her orders?
4. Who is waiting?

B. 1. Who was with the Queen?
2. What orders had the Queen given about Merytra?
3. What did the Queen dream about Rames?
4. What did the Queen see in the first picture?
5. What will Abi seize in the second dream?

C. 1. Which dream did Kaku say was the true one?
2. Where must Abi hang Rames?
3. Why did Kaku give that meaning to the Queen's dream?

32. A. 1. How many months had gone by?
2. Where was the army of Pharaoh?
3. Where was the army of Rames?
4. What did they see just above the sunset?

B. 1. What is the star of Amen doing to the star of Abi?
2. Who appeared to Merytra in her dream?
3. What will be done to Rames and Merytra tomorrow?

C. 1. Where must Abi look for Neter Tua?
2. Whom did they see while they were searching for the Queen?
3. To what did this man tell the people to listen?
4. What did he tell the people to do to Abi and Kaku?

D. 1. What did the priests say?

33. A. 1. Where was Tua sleeping?
2. What does the Ka want to do?
3. What day is this?

B. 1. What did the captain report?
2. Who were among the messengers?
3. Who stood up and spoke?
4. What did the high priest say that Tua did?
5. What did Tua answer?

C. 1. What has the high priest seen for two years?
2. What had the priests believed about Asti?
3. Who were the prisoners?
4. Why had these people been brought to Neter Tua?

D. 1. What did the high priest cry?
2. Who came out from the inner part of the temple?
3. What is the command of the gods about Rames and Neter Tua?
4. Where are Abi, Kaku and Merytra to be put?

PRONUNCIATION GUIDE

THE pronunciation given in brackets is the system used in *The New Method Dictionary*. It is followed by the symbols of the International Phonetic Alphabet.

ABI	(4·11)	ˈabii
ABTU	(3·7)	ˈæbtu
AHURA	(4·7·9)	aˈhurə
AMATHEL	(3·3·2)	ˈæmæθel
AMEN	(44·2)	aaˈmen
ASTI	(3·11)	ˈæstii
BUBASTES	(17·3·11)	biuˈbæstiiz
HATHOR	(21·55)	ˈheiθɔɔ
HYKSOS	(1·5)	ˈhiksɔs
ISIS	(41·1)	ˈaisis
JANEES	(3·11)	dʒæˈniis
KA	(44)	kaa
KAKU	(4·7)	ˈkaku
KARNAK	(44·3)	ˈkaanæk
KEPHER	(2·9)	ˈkefə
KESH	(2)	keʃ
LUXOR	(8·55)	ˈlʌksɔɔ
MEMPHIS	(2·1)	ˈmemfis
MENA	(11·9)	miinə
MERMES	(99·11)	ˈməəmiiz
MERYTRA	(2·1·9)	meˈritrə
NEFERTE	(2·99·11)	neˈfəətii
NETER TUA	(2·9–7·9)	ˈnetə ˈtuə
NILE	(41)	nail
OSIRIS	(5·41·1)	ɔˈsairis
PHARAOH	(29·67)	ˈfeərou
RAMES	(3·11)	ˈræmiiz
RIDER HAGGARD	(41·9–3·9)	ˈraidə ˈhægəd
SEKHET	(2·2)	seket
THEBES	(11)	θiibz

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